

Rubina Khan · Ahmed Bashir ·
Bijoy Lal Basu · Md. Elias Uddin *Editors*

Local Research and Glocal Perspectives in English Language Teaching

Teaching in Changing Times

 Springer

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ISBN 978-981-19-6457-2

ISBN 978-981-19-6458-9 (eBook)

<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-6458-9>

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This book is dedicated to all English language teachers who work under difficult circumstances and walk the extra mile to make a difference in the lives of their students.

Foreword

Glocalization is a term coined originally in the 1980s to describe how global products can be marketed successfully around the world through adaptation to local conditions and cultures. It is thus connected with late capitalism and globalization, which themselves are strongly linked historically with colonialism and bound up, latterly, with various forms of neocolonial relationship. In our field of English language teaching, the days when an unadapted new method, concept, technology, fashion, or fad could be exported from the west unreflectively and as self-evidently ‘best practice’ are long gone—or are they? It was only 30 years ago after all, in the 1990s, that a critical turn occurred in ‘mainstream’ ELT discourse and that the latest Euro- or Anglo-centric dogma—Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)—began to be shown to be in need of critique and/or adaptation when introduced into school systems in Asia and elsewhere. In Bangladesh, which has been both a major recipient of western donor aid and a prime site both for discourses of development and for post-colonial critiques of them, the 2000s and the 2010s saw large-scale UK-funded attempts to expose primary and secondary school teachers to CLT—the English Language Teaching Improvement Project (ELTIP) and the English in Action (EIA) project, respectively. A move towards glocalization has been relatively in evidence in the latter scheme; fundamentally, however, the dynamic has remained the same, with western donors and experts promoting a package—English and a particular way or ways of teaching it—which is viewed as self-evidently good for development, to some extent adapted to local exigencies but without in any significant respect being *based on* local priorities, excepting here the input from elite stakeholders (government officials, industrial leaders, university academics, and so on).

This brings us to a second sense in which the term *glocal* might be used and which is in fact relevant to quite a few chapters in this volume, one more attuned to its use in the social sciences overall. This views *glocal* not as necessarily imbued by neoliberalism and neocolonialism but as an aspect of resistance to the excesses of globalization and/or as a description of cross-fertilization between global and local ideas, with neither being privileged over the other. Reading the chapters in this book, it strikes me that the COVID-19 pandemic, alongside its destructive effects, may be

providing us with a new space in which to take stock and make moves towards this second, more democratic form of ‘glocalism’.

Here, the notions of *agency* and *voice* come to the fore, accompanying the idea of *localism*. The educational challenges of the pandemic have everywhere, it seems, been responded to with great resilience by teachers, not because they have followed orders from on high, as governments and academic leaders were taken by surprise by new needs for distanced teaching and learning, but because their creativity and care for learners have shone through as guiding lights. Teachers have taken the opportunity to develop new ways of reaching students, learning more from trial and error, reflection on experience, and feedback from students than from pre-packaged recipes for response.

Of course, technology and the Internet have enabled many interventions, but not in all cases, and particularly not where connectivity and access to devices have been a problem, as in much of South Asia. In such circumstances, teachers have nevertheless succeeded in reaching students, even when this requires personal visits or deliveries of materials. This is not to underestimate the degree to which the pandemic has exposed and exacerbated inequalities of educational provision nor to suggest that the picture has been a rosy one, merely to point out that opportunities have arisen for engagement of teacher agency which perhaps did not previously exist to the same degree in severely constrained school systems, and that technology is being viewed as a *tool* by teachers, not just an imposed requirement.

In the absence of central direction or relevant academic guidance, teachers have been learning, too, from other teachers, perhaps to a greater extent than may have been the case in the past. English teachers, in particular, may have benefitted from the internationalism of our profession—certainly, the number of webinars and online discussions featuring teachers talking to other teachers across contexts and even continents seemed to dramatically increase in 2020–21, with developing local expertise being shared internationally and teachers’ voices being heard as much as the views of outside experts unfamiliar with the new teaching and learning conditions.

In the changed time of the pandemic, then, local explorations and solutions led and developed by teaching professionals themselves have had resonance for other teachers, in other contexts, globally or, rather, glocally in the second, relatively bottom-up sense of this term mentioned above. Looking forward, a general lesson from this for academic researchers and development project managers is that there is value in investigating and documenting teachers’ and learners’ experience thoroughly, involving them in research in participatory ways, and building interventions from there to enhance existing practice, rather than attempting to impose solutions or even ‘adapt’ solutions developed originally elsewhere. This will involve *local research*, of immediate value to the participants involved but potentially with wider resonance when shared. In other words, tapping into and building on teachers’ and learners’ experience, in post-pandemic as in pandemic times, could provide a new opportunity to combine critiques of globalization and development—and of the role of English and English teaching within these—with work which builds constructively on the local concerns and actions of teachers and learners at the forefront of change.

For we do live in changing times. The COVID-19 pandemic—despite the specific needs for change it has brought to teachers and learners—may in some ways seem a respite from change, from some of the affordances or effects of globalization in fact, as mobility has decreased and as we have come to appreciate or at least have learned to live within a more restricted physical, local environment. However, we know, too, that there is a whole world turning out there: even as nation states have erected physical and, to different degrees, attitudinal barriers, the pandemic has alerted us to worldwide interdependence and to the needs for interconnected thought and action in response to globalized problems, with pandemics and climate change chief among these. ‘Think globally, act locally’, as the slogan goes, or should that be ‘Think locally, act globally’? We sense both that change has been speeding up around us and that we will need to *make* changes in an uncertain, post-pandemic future.

As English teachers, whether local or expatriate, we may be particularly aware of global interconnectivity. Among the many virtues of this book is the way the editors have brought together writers from different backgrounds, eschewing essentialization or stereotyping of different types of teacher but instead emphasizing commonalities in experience, a sense that we are all ‘in this together’. Together weaving a rich tapestry of researched experience, the chapter authors also deserve praise for the manner in which they have individually overcome the problems of the pandemic, in order to—as the editors put it—‘engage with global theories, methods and concepts while not losing sight of local contingencies’. Researching, writing, and thinking locally, glocally, and globally, the editors and authors have succeeded in providing a wide range of insights into important ELT topics ranging from curriculum and materials to assessment and teacher education—and all of this at a particularly challenging yet interesting point in our changing times.

October 2021

Prof. Richard Smith
University of Warwick
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Acknowledgements

This volume is the outcome of a long period of collaboration, commitment, and hard work. At the outset, we would like to thank all the authors who have contributed chapters to this volume. We thank them for their patience and the long wait to see their chapters published.

We would also like to thank Springer for believing in our vision to put together this edited volume. Special thanks go to Grace Liyan Ma, Senior Editor, Education Books, Springer Nature, Sanjeevkumar Mathiyazhagan, and the production team for their support. We would like to convey our gratitude to the Springer reviewers for their guidance and insightful comments on the manuscript. We are indebted to Prof. Richard Smith for his foreword. We also express our gratitude to Prof. Fakrul Alam and other reviewers for providing feedback and constructive criticism on several chapters.

Finally, we owe special thanks to our family members who showed extreme patience and provided support by allowing us to work for this volume beyond working hours and often late into the night.

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Correction to: Economisation of the Secondary English Curriculum in Bangladesh C1
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Chapter 1

Introduction



Rubina Khan, Ahmed Bashir, Bijoy Lal Basu, and Md. Elias Uddin

Abstract This introductory chapter provides an overview of the edited volume by describing the aims, themes, and organization of the book. The chapter sets the scene by providing an outline of recent trends and developments in the field of English language education in Bangladesh as well as in other contexts around the world. It provides the twofold objective of the volume and explains the rationale for bringing together a varied group of scholars from home and abroad, both young and experienced, in producing this book. The chapter also explicates our broad aim of providing a glocal perspective on socio-cultural issues in ELT, curriculum and materials, ELT practices, assessment, educational technology, and teacher education. It then presents a brief synopsis of each chapter and points out the potential beneficiaries of the book.

Keywords English language education · Curriculum change · Assessment · Technology · Globalization · Glocal perspectives

Globalization has led to increasing characterization of English as a language of migration, higher education, international trade, and employment in policy documents and national curricula in many contexts (Block, Gray & Holborow, 2013; Chowdhury & Erling, 2021; Coleman, 2011; Erling & Seargeant, 2013; Flubacher & Del Percio, 2017). At the same time, rapid developments in science and technology facilitated the global flow of theories, ideas, and concepts about best practices in English language education which forced English language educators in ‘periphery’ contexts

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to question age-old approaches to teaching, learning, assessment, and teacher education (Block & Cameron, 2002; Hyland & Wong, 2013). Many developing countries responded by borrowing, often uncritically, policies, methods, and materials from what Holliday (1994) calls the BANA (Britain, Australasia and North America) contexts for use in state sector education (Holliday, 2016; Wedell & Grassick, 2017). This reflected what Rubdy (2009) calls “top-down processes of globalization” (p. 156) which resulted in the “suppression and devaluation of local forms of knowledge and practice” (p. 156). Canagarajah (2005) called this “a one-sided imposition of homogenous discourses and intellectual traditions by a few dominant communities” (p. xiii) which seemed to produce less than satisfactory results in English language education in Global South as indicated by numerous studies in the field (e.g. Hamid & Rahman, 2019; Hamid & Erling, 2016; Hamid & Baldauf, 2008; Hu & McKay, 2012) and often had adverse effects on the learners and the communities involved (Canagarajah, 2005; Pennycook, 1994; Phillipson, 2013). Therefore, English language teaching professionals in many non-BANA contexts were forced to re-examine existing policies and practices of teaching, learning, assessment, and teacher education. One major reason for the discrepancy between ELT change initiatives and successful implementation was a lack of due consideration of local contextual and cultural factors (Chowdhury & Le Ha, 2008; Kramsch, 1993; Nguyen, Terlouw & Pilot, 2006). It is therefore not surprising that the following decades have seen, in both policy and practice, attempts at reconciliation of the global with the local as evident in revised policies, pedagogies, materials, assessment, and teacher education (Canagarajah, 2005; Hall, 2017; Hamid & Erling, 2016; Hyland & Wong, 2013).

We have also witnessed technologies making inroads not only into offices, businesses, and households but also into the language classroom. The development of mobile apps and online platforms has made language learning and teaching easier and faster (Sauro & Chapelle, 2017). The COVID-19 crisis has provided further impetus for incorporating educational technologies rapidly into teaching and learning with many classrooms shifting online. Teachers are now faced with the challenges of taking advantage of the affordances of online technologies to facilitate student learning as well as to further their professional growth as teachers, researchers, and academics. Recent studies have highlighted the benefits and possibilities that online apps and platforms offer for teaching (Rosell-Aguilar, 2018), providing feedback (Xu & Peng, 2017) and professional collaboration among teachers (Nguyen & Ng, 2020). Nevertheless, issues of access, affordability, and equity still remain unaddressed or partially addressed in different contexts. Research initiatives aiming at finding context-specific solutions are paramount.

This book is designed to bring global and local scholars together to further our understanding of the issues, whether unique or shared across contexts, that we face in English language education today and the multiple responses that we may adopt to deal with these issues. The chapters in this volume are intended to offer global perspectives as the authors engage with global theories, methods, and concepts while not losing sight of local contingencies. Many of the chapters are written by scholars who have lived and worked in several countries and diverse contexts. Some of the

chapters are produced through collaboration between scholars. Thus, the goal of providing global perspectives underpins the *modus operandi* in producing the book as reflected in the collaborative nature of writing and editing the chapters.

Aims of the Book

The book aims to provide an overview of recent trends and developments in the field of English language education. It intends to do this by showcasing research endeavours from a heterogeneous group of scholars from different parts of the world. The book includes chapters by some well-known Western scholars with the experience of working in Asia. It also features contributions by Bangladeshi academics stationed in Bangladesh and abroad. Another aim is to bring together perspectives from experienced and emerging researchers. This book provides a platform for established as well as emerging practitioners and scholars in the field of English language teaching to share their research.

This volume has been conceived with dual objectives. The first one is to bring theory and practice together into one volume. While global developments in theories, policies, and practices influence local policies and practices in myriad ways, it has been observed that there is often a gap between theoretical developments in our field and classroom practices. We begin with the premise that theory and practice feed into each other. Theories can inform and enrich practice, while practice can also lead to revision and refinement of theories. In this volume, we intend to capture the interplay of the two for the best possible outcome. The second objective is to present, in one volume, local and global perspectives on current theories and practices in the field of English language education.

Organization of the Book

This volume is divided into six parts and captures a broad spectrum of topics encompassing core components of English language education. The chapters in each part of the volume, with diverse but interconnected themes, cover the sub-areas of English language teaching and hence the organization of the chapters into the six parts: ‘Socio-cultural Perspectives in English Language Teaching’, ‘Curriculum and Materials’, ‘Educational Technology’, ‘ELT Practices’, ‘Assessment’, and ‘Teacher Education’. The six parts are, however, interrelated, and they are not to be seen in isolation or viewed as watertight compartments as their boundaries are fluid and tend to overlap. In addition to the introductory and the concluding chapters, the volume contains 28 chapters that present both empirical and conceptual research in the field of English language education.

Part I: Socio-cultural Perspectives in ELT

The four chapters in the first part of the book focus on socio-cultural perspectives in English language teaching by linking teaching and learning to local contextual exigencies.

Global flows at a macro-level increasingly shape the distant local phenomena, making the global–local interface porous and super-diverse (Arnaut, Blommaert, Rampton & Spotti, 2015; Blommaert, 2010). The discourse of development, for example, which has had a robust influence over Southern ELT ideologies and practices, needs to be understood more holistically and critically to align local multilingualism to local needs and aspirations to further sustainable development. The goals of language teaching also need to be re-examined in the intersection of this changed global scenario and the fluidity of lived sociolinguistic experiences in the South. A shift in attitudes to English vis-a-vis the local languages leading to the inseparability of the languages in the workings of the multilingual mind has brought translanguaging practices and plurilinguality to the fore (Canagarajah, 2011; García & Wei, 2014; Wei, 2011, 2018). Whether or not such practices should be encouraged in the classroom has become a matter of debate revealing divergent perspectives on appropriacy, ‘linguistic purity’, and normative behaviour. Local educational traditions, scholarship, expertise, and cultural norms deserve consideration in the development of teacher education programmes in the Global South. Despite progress made in this direction, there is still a long way to go as the BANA-centric norms are deeply entrenched in English language teaching practices in many contexts including South Asia. This warrants a renewed call to incorporate culturally sensitive and context-appropriate methodologies in teacher preparation programmes for local contexts.

Chapter 2 by Qumrul Hasan Chowdhury presents a critical review of ELT and development discourses in Bangladesh. It provides a historical overview of development, from economic growth to human development, and to more recent ‘Development Goals’, and critically gauges the nexus of development to language educational practices including English. Arguing that neither the discourse of ‘development’ is settled nor its relationship with English, it urges that the local ELT should exercise its multilingual agency to contest hegemony and inequality.

Abu Saleh Mohammad Rafi, in Chap. 3, shares findings from a focus group discussion of English-major students who participated in a translanguaging pedagogical intervention in their ELT classroom of a Bangladeshi private university. The study found that the English-medium instruction policy posed problems for Bangla-medium students which included difficulties in understanding lectures and demotivation. The author argues that translanguaging pedagogies, in contrast, aid students’ understanding of ELT materials and discuss the reasons why such pedagogies might face opposition from the policymakers.

In Chap. 4, Laxman Gnawali presents a South Asian perspective by emphasizing the role of local cultures in teacher education programmes. The author questions the relevance of estern models of teacher education for local contexts in Nepal and other

South Asian nations. Drawing on data collected through teacher educator interviews and teacher education curricula, the chapter emphasizes the importance of adapting teacher education programmes in the light of local teaching and learning cultures.

In the final chapter of this part, Shree Deepa and Geetha Durairajan provide a critical perspective on creative language use by multilingual learners of English in India. The authors argue that a monolingual paradigm of language use modelled on the native speakers of English living in the USA or the UK may not suit the multilingual Indian context. The authors provide examples of language use collected from young English users in the multilingual Indian context to show how the utterances reflect linguistic creativity and why the creative expressions should be accepted for what they are. They finally argue that parents and teachers should not be guided by the supposed ‘purity’ attached to monolingual norms to evaluate creative language use as deviations. Adults supervising learners should celebrate learners’ emerging expressions and allow them to grow and develop into legitimate English speakers.

Part II: Curriculum and Materials

The second part of the book consists of six chapters that explore the products as well as processes and influences shaping the development of English language curricula and materials in English language education in public and private sectors. Some of the chapters reveal how English language curricula and materials have undergone changes over the years reflecting the dominant ideas, values and trends in the field of ELT as well as in the broader field of education. The principles of outcome-based education and communicative language teaching have been steadily incorporated in curriculum policies as well as materials. Global political and economic policy models such as neoliberalism have led to the economization of language curricula across the world. A few of the chapters highlight the role of the curriculum framework in centralized educational cultures as in Bangladesh serving as the blueprint for materials and tests. Nevertheless, micro-political and socio-cultural practices interact in complex ways with the manner materials are developed and may be used in the classroom. There will necessarily be limitations in the textbooks and teachers need to find ways of supplementing them to promote the development of multi-literacies and students’ identities and emotional development. Developing context-appropriate materials can be a meaningful way of teachers’ professional development.

Chapter 6, by Md. Maksud Ali and M. Obaidul Hamid, critically explores the increasing alignment of the English language curriculum and pedagogy in Bangladesh with the employment market. It provides an analysis of public policies and secondary English curricula and textbooks using critical discourse analysis. The chapter contributes to our understanding of the changing nature of English curricula in developing societies in a globalized world.

Muhammed Shahriar Haque and Md. Masudul Hasan, in Chap. 7, discuss the emergence of a dynamic curriculum in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and rapid developments of information and communication technologies. The chapter

discusses the significance of an outcome-based living curriculum for the MA in ELT programme of private universities of Bangladesh. It also examines the changes in the curriculum due to the effects of COVID-19 and technology-based online education during the closure of educational institutions at two private universities in Bangladesh.

The findings of a multiple-case study on three play-based English kindergartens in Seoul are reported in Chap. 8 by Jeehee Kim and Tae-Hee Choi. They contend that in Korea, English kindergartens have become more popular than Korean-medium kindergartens as the former enjoy more autonomy compared to the latter regarding their curriculum. The study documents the curriculum practised in the three English kindergartens and shows how the curriculum and instruction are shaped by the tension between various policies for English kindergartens in Korea.

Cherie Brown, in Chap. 9, outlines the emergence and development of an ongoing international collaborative materials writing project called ‘Stories About Ourselves’ between the writer and a dedicated group of English language teachers from universities in Bangladesh. The chapter highlights the benefits of the initiative in terms of building teachers’ skill sets in developing culturally appropriate materials, enhancing their English skills, and contributing to their professional development.

Chapter 10, by Arifa Rahman, explores the complexity of developing state-mandated English textbooks in the foreign/second language setting in Bangladesh. She examines the principles and objectives that regulated the English textbook writing for the higher secondary level in 2015. The author applies a wide critical lens to the language education system, revealing an entangled network of micro-political and socio-cultural practices that create serious challenges to both the materials development exercise and its implementation among users.

To make a case for incorporating graphic novels for developing multi-literacy in adolescent learners in the context of increasing multilingualism in language classrooms, Sonia Sharmin, in Chap. 11, discusses the potential benefits of graphic novels over traditional monolithic texts and shares practical ideas and classroom activities for developing multi-literacies, students’ self-esteem as well as language skills. The author also suggests ways of incorporating graphic novels in different classroom contexts.

Part III: Educational Technology

The chapters in this part of the book deal with the ways in which educational technologies can be harnessed to propel language teaching and learning. The last couple of decades have seen the advent of language learning apps, advanced recording devices, web tools, and platforms for video conferencing. While technologies have certain downsides, there is no denying the fact that they can also accelerate learning, facilitate teaching, and promote independent learning. Self-assessment tools and auto-correction application software have allowed learners to learn on their own. Nevertheless, the beliefs that teachers and students hold can greatly influence their

adoption and use of technologies. There are individuals who experience anxiety about new technologies and may be reluctant to use them. Discussion with teachers and students, training, and continuous support for them are essential for the successful integration of new technologies and for the best possible outcome. Unequal access and affordability issues pose challenges in making the most of technology in developing world contexts. Nevertheless, the COVID-19 pandemic has made it clear that technology is indispensable, and technology integration is a necessity rather than an option in the ‘new normal’ situation. This section consists of four chapters that throw light on the potential benefits of technology resources, students’ and teachers’ beliefs, and actual challenges involved in their integration in English language teaching and learning.

Farhana Ahmed, in Chap. 12, examines changes in learners’ beliefs towards technology-enhanced language learning (TELL) in a Canadian EAP university programme. Data from embedded case studies revealed contextual and pedagogical factors that influenced students’ attitudes towards and subsequent use of technology in EAP. There are implications for leveraging students’ digital resources and ongoing critical and reflective teaching practices.

Chapter 13, by Rubina Khan, Ahmed Bashir, Bijoy Lal Basu, and Md. Elias Uddin, reports on a study that examined university-level English teachers’ experiences of technology integration and their initiatives for learning to integrate technology into their classrooms during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study found that despite lack of adequate institutional training, teachers learned through self-initiatives and in collaboration with colleagues as well as from professional learning networks. This study provides evidence of teachers’ resilience and their active role in dealing with unforeseen challenges.

In Chap. 14, Anjuman Ara sheds light on the affordances and challenges of online collaborative writing activities on Pbwikis, an asynchronous web tool, from Bangladeshi EFL learner perspectives. The chapter reveals how effectively Pbwikis can be used to engage tertiary-level students in online collaborative tasks and to provide scaffolding during the writing process.

Through a small-scale investigation on the nature of students’ interaction and collaboration during online learning in a premier public university in Bangladesh, Rumana Rafique, in Chap. 15, explores the benefits of various online tools and platforms such as Zoom and Google Classroom to promote collaboration and interaction. The chapter also suggests possible strategies to promote synchronous and asynchronous interaction and collaboration among adult students.

Part IV: ELT Practices

The fourth part of the book contains five chapters that present conceptual and practical challenges as well as possibilities facing English language teachers today. Teaching grammar and language skills using up-to-date pedagogies remains a major goal for English teachers around the world. We have come to know that while activities

supporting learners' writing skills can be enhanced through technological tools and software, issues of access, resource constraints, and plagiarism pose serious challenges. In the context of the pandemic and the threat of extreme weather induced by climate change looming, English language teaching can no longer remain limited to teaching the four skills but needs to engage with broader social issues to develop students as future leaders and enable them to solve problems in their communities. Understanding the students and identifying their attitudes is an important step in engaging them in the educational enterprise. Educational disruption during the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in concerns for access to education. A radical shift characterized by a learning-to-learn approach with the potential of developing learner independence and problem-solving skills is suggested as the way forward.

Joshua John Jodoin, in Chap. 16, makes the point that we need to equip our students with knowledge and understanding of the complexity of the climate crisis so that they can contribute to future solutions. He argues that the English language teaching (ELT) profession can play an instrumental role in shaping our future citizenry through Language Education for Sustainable Development (LESD). He points out that this can be done by incorporating Sustainable Development (SD) as essential content. He contends that LESD will not only improve reading skills but will also promote students' critical thinking skills by focusing on the major challenges that face us today.

Chapter 17 presents the findings of a language learning diary project which was undertaken by the author to enhance Japanese trainee teachers' autonomy and awareness as English language learners. Anne McLellan Howard reports that the participants wrote a diary during a fifteen-week semester following the author's personal diary as a model and analysed their diaries in terms of the concepts taught to them such as motivation, anxiety, and willingness to communicate. The findings of this analysis show that the participants have developed an awareness of their language learning both inside and outside the classroom which may indicate an increase in their autonomy as language learners.

Chapter 18, by Akram Nayernia and Hassan Mohebbi, offers a review of the major studies conducted from 2000 onward on EFL writing instruction and testing in the context of Iran. It also sheds light on the issues of teacher's cognition, practice, pedagogical knowledge, assessment literacy, and learners' needs and preferences in relation to writing instruction in the Iranian context. The chapter concludes by highlighting the areas that deserve the attention of researchers, educational policymakers, and materials developers.

In Chap. 19, Akhter Jahan and Subramaniam Govindasamy share the findings of a fourteen-week quasi-experimental study with one hundred Bangladeshi tertiary learners. It investigated the use of multiple exposures to enhanced texts and its impact on the participants' noticing and grammatical improvement of three pairs of forms in relation to some specific uses of articles, modal auxiliaries, and voice in the noun and the verb phrases. The findings show an increase in noticing and acquisition of the targeted forms by the participants. The authors highlight the need for introducing

textual enhancement features and ‘form-meaning-function mappings’ of grammatical forms in the language classroom to enhance the grammatical development of English language learners.

Kalyani Samantray, in Chap. 20, discusses the theory of disruptive innovations as used in business sectors. The author shows how this model can be employed in the English education curriculum to prepare learners to adapt to a post-pandemic changed world. The chapter presents some disruptive techniques to meet the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic in the teaching and learning of English at all levels. The chapter highlights the need for providing quality education through a learning-to-learn approach and providing equitable access to education.

Part V: Assessment

Part V of the book addresses topics related to assessment and includes chapters that focus on learning-oriented assessment, formative assessment, assessment literacy, test construction, and test impact. Language assessment is nowadays viewed as “a socio-culturally embedded process” (Bachman & Damböck, 2018, p. 3), and there is a growing awareness of the importance of classroom-based assessment which aims to improve learning and teaching. Recent studies have focused on assessment for learning (Baird, Andrich, Hopfenbeck, & Stobart, 2017; Wiliam, 2017a, 2017b) and alternative assessment procedures to accommodate learning needs. Teachers can design tests in ways that promote learning before, during, and after the assessment. Learning-oriented assessment has been advanced on the premise that it enables a more holistic and learner-centred assessment and assists in achieving learning goals. The traditional practice of providing feedback on the finished product is now being replaced by teachers’ involvement from the start. Another shift in focus has been prompted by the COVID-19 situation as we moved from traditional to technology-based assessment. In the ‘new normal’, face-to-face assessment has been replaced by online assessment. This trend is further demonstrated in the increasing levels of automation and a shift towards project-based learning assessment. Nevertheless, writing accurate test items in the light of test design, course goals, and contextual realities continue to be of central importance in ensuring the validity and reliability of language tests. The impact of high-stakes tests on various stakeholders is another area that merits critical consideration. Finally, ensuring the involvement of assessment-literate teachers with sound theoretical knowledge and practical know-how about assessment is imperative for creating effective assessment tasks.

In Chap. 21, Peter Davidson and Christine Coombe focus on learning-oriented assessment (LOA) and discuss how to implement it in the classroom. They outline what teachers can do within an LOA framework before, during, and after an assessment, in order to facilitate learning. They also address some of the criticisms that have been made against LOA and outline the implications of taking an LOA approach.

In her exploratory study, presented in Chap. 22, on the assessment literacy of tertiary-level teachers of English departments in Bangladesh, Rubina Khan found

that teachers perceived assessment mainly as a measurement of learning, and they lacked adequate training in assessment and hence confidence about their assessment practices. The author recommends the incorporation of compulsory assessment training focusing on a combination of theoretical and practical assessment elements for the pre-service and in-service teacher professional development programmes in Bangladesh and other similar contexts. The chapter concludes by highlighting the need for ongoing action research as well as extensive research on the needs and assessment practices of teachers.

In Chap. 23, Saraswati Dawadi presents the findings of a study that investigated the impact of a high-stakes secondary school national English as a foreign language (EFL) test on parents in the Nepalese context. The study found that parents were affected, though to varying degrees based on their educational background and their own past experiences, by some social, economic, and psychological factors linked to the test. The chapter concludes with the implication that schools and education policymakers should provide support to the parents helping their children prepare for the EFL test.

In Chap. 24, Md. Elias Uddin discusses common Multiple Choice Question (MCQ) item violations with illustrative samples from the English language ability sections of high-stakes Bangladeshi recruitment tests and explains how the item violations affect the validity and reliability of the tests. The item writers and item moderators in Bangladesh may use the checklist of common MCQ item violations provided in this chapter to avoid flaws while designing MCQ items. It is argued that the implications highlighted in this chapter can be applied to MCQ use in universal contexts, beyond Bangladesh.

Part VI: Teacher Education

The final part of the book brings together contributions related to teacher education which is of central importance in our profession. Recent scholarship in the field has argued that teacher education programmes need to adopt a more dialogic and participatory approach to teacher professional development to enable teachers and teacher educators to arrive at an understanding of best practices in their contexts and to find solutions to specific problems (Johnson, 2015). There have been suggestions for alternative approaches to teacher education which include collaboration between teachers and researchers, and partnerships between local and global scholars where the focus is on continuing professional development through improved teaching and learning. Scholars have put forward suggestions for adopting local perspectives in teacher education programmes (Darling-Hammond & Lieberman, 2013; Johnson & Golombek, 2020). The contents of teacher education programmes have also come under scrutiny for their lack of relevance to local needs. Under the current circumstances of the pandemic which necessitated the emergence of online education around the world, the possibility of blended pedagogies as a preferred mode of instruction in the post-pandemic world calls for an overhaul of the content and delivery of

teacher education programmes. The chapters in this part cover a range of topics such as the role of teachers' beliefs in their professional development, teachers' experiences in changing policy contexts, impacts of volunteer teacher training on teachers and teacher educators, the relevance of teacher education curricula to current and future needs of teachers, and the importance of teacher research for finding local and transferable solutions.

Chapter 25, by Jason Anderson, explores the theoretical and practical challenges and affordances involved in researching, developing, and disseminating teacher expertise on a local scale in the Global South. In addition to discussing a number of possible solutions to strengthening local expertise, the chapter provides a detailed description of one of these solutions through a participatory case study of teacher expertise in Indian secondary education, involving eight expert teachers of English. The chapter concludes by proposing a model for strengthening classroom practices and teacher education within national and regional contexts that draws upon both indigenous teacher expertise and teacher classroom research.

Chapter 26, by Patrick Dougherty and Aya Shinozaki Dougherty, sheds light on the personal, professional, and pedagogical growth of volunteer teacher educators. It focuses on the impact of an innovative teacher education programme called 'Teachers Helping Teachers' (THT) operating in Bangladesh, Vietnam, Laos, the Philippines, and Kyrgyzstan. The results of their study could be useful for those aiming for innovating and reforming current teacher training programmes.

In Chap. 27, Fuad Abdul Hamied provides a critical analysis of current language policies in Indonesia with a specific focus on the ways the policymakers responded to such challenges as global competitiveness, teacher professionalism, and quality teacher education. The author also offers a critical analysis of issues of teacher competencies, use of the Indonesian language, curriculum changes, and assessment washback and discusses their implications for teacher education programmes.

Chapter 28, by Jane Jenvey, reports on a longitudinal study of English language teachers training in London who subsequently work in various global contexts. It critically examines beliefs about the nature and status of the profession in centre contexts from a socio-cultural perspective. It also discusses the implications of novice teachers' unrealistic and flawed expectations for their professional development as well as for the English language teaching profession in general.

In Chap. 29, Tae-Hee Choi and Prem Prasad Poudel argue that teachers require more resources, access, and skills to deal with the current changes in teaching and learning conditions. The authors present an analysis of TESOL teacher education materials and curricula from the two contexts of South Korea and Nepal previous to the COVID-19-induced lockdown to identify the common core of these programmes in both contexts and gaps that need to be filled for the programmes to be useful during the pandemic as well as in post-pandemic times.

In the concluding chapter, we have summarized the insights from the chapters and discussed future directions for English language education in the twenty-first century.

Conclusion

In producing this volume, we aimed to showcase current thinking and practice on a range of topics in Applied Linguistics and ELT from diverse contexts particularly in the Global South. The findings of the studies presented in the volume have implications for ELT curriculum and materials, teaching practices, assessment, and teacher education. Despite the best efforts of the editors and the authors, however, gaps remain in our coverage and presentation of topics. The inherent challenges of publishing a volume of such magnitude were further compounded by the timing of the project during the pandemic. We believe that the book will be useful for a range of stakeholders including teachers, graduate students, teacher educators, institutions, programme leaders, teacher associations, researchers, language education policy-makers, development partners, and national and international bodies responsible for English language education in changing times.

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Part I
Socio-cultural Perspectives in ELT

Chapter 2

ELT and Development in Bangladesh: A Critical Overview



Qumrul Hasan Chowdhury

Abstract Owing to the status of English as a global language, external donors, supported by the states, growingly promote the language for the economic development of countries in the Global South including Bangladesh. It is in this context that I argue that the local ELT has a crucial role to play, particularly by showing critical awareness of the theoretical and empirical processes of English for development discourse as a potential means of dehegemonisation of unwarranted ELT interventions. To this end, I provide a critical overview of the discourses of development, language and development, and English for development in this chapter to draw relevant insights for the local ELT. I show that development discourses are not settled, and within language and development scholarship, there is a greater understanding to critically explore the value of local languages for sustainable development. Showing furthermore that English and development discourses are not resolved either, both in the global and national contexts of Bangladesh, I argue, referring to the theoretical concept of ‘glocalization’, that the local ELT should play a more informed, agentive, and sensitive role to situate English for development discourses amidst the local needs and aspirations to make a sustainable impact.

Keywords English · ELT · Development · Bangladesh · Global South

Introduction

English language teaching in countries in the Global South has a historical relationship with the discourses of development and development aid. Increased globalization and the neoliberal economy have arguably enhanced the economic value of language and language skills (Heller, 2013; Rassool, 2007; Shin & Park, 2016). Language is also viewed as a facilitative factor in the contemporary discussions of inclusive, holistic, and sustainable development (Bamgbose, 2014; Djité, 2008). Over the last three decades, growing activities can be observed exploring how language can be

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relevant both for individual and national economic progress as well as in donor-funded development programmes in the Global South. The salience of English as a world language has intensified the focus on English with the language being viewed as useful for global Southern countries to be more favourably positioned in the present globalized economy (Rassool, 2007, 2013). Although a direct relationship between English and national economic well-being is yet to be established, international development agencies, with support from states, explore and promote the language as a key to development (Coleman, 2011; Erling & Seargeant, 2013). Bangladesh, with a colonial background of English, large population, limited availability of resources and desire for development, increasingly comes under the influence of the English for development discourse. Led by the external donors and approved by the state, English is steadily promoted for the economic development of Bangladesh which significantly shapes local English in education policies, pedagogies and practices (Erling, 2017; Hamid & Erling, 2016). ELT projects funded by external donors, which play a consequential role in the local ELT decisions and activities, are a major catalyst in this promotion, seeking avenues to widen the development opportunities of Bangladesh by upscaling the national standard of English (Erling, 2017). I argue that ELT in Bangladesh as well as other similar contexts of the Global South is critically positioned to this development-aimed promotion of English, mediating the local grassroots-level realities and needs on the one hand and macro-level policies and goals on the other. The ideology that they embrace and the pedagogy that they exercise therefore are crucial, whether to resist hegemony (e.g. Canagarajah, 1999) or to influence local beliefs and practices of teaching and learning English. It is against the background of this development penetrated English language environment in the Global South, particularly Bangladesh and the importance of local ELT communities to shape ideologies or practices that I critically review in this chapter some of the relevant discourses of language/English and development to inform local ELT. Showing that English and development discourses are not settled whether, in the global or the national context of Bangladesh, I argue, referring to the theoretical view of 'glocalization' (Ritzer, 2003; Robertson, 1995), that a local ELT more critically informed by the theoretical and empirical processes of English and development as well as the local realities can more agentively and efficiently navigate English for development interventions. To this end, I first present the notion of development and then discuss how language is increasingly associated with development. I then unpack some of the arguments and counterarguments of English and development. Finally, I turn to critically examine the ELT and development context of Bangladesh and draw a conclusion.

Development

Development can be traditionally viewed as economic growth in terms of accumulation of wealth and improvement of infrastructures (Arndt, 1987). A more holistic view of development, commonly known as 'human development', is inspired by

human needs and aims to enhance the freedom and capabilities of people for their well-being (Sen, 1999; UNDP, 2010). UNDP (2010) defines human development as ‘the expansion of people’s freedom to live long, healthy, and creative lives; to advance other goals they have reason to value; and to engage actively in shaping development equitably and sustainably’ (p. 22). Since the 2000s, development views have tended to focus more on combining human development and measuring development impact as reflected in the ‘Development Goals’ (Coleman, 2017). The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) was initiated in 2000 to ‘eradicate extreme poverty and hunger’; ‘achieve universal primary education’; ‘promote gender equality and empower women’; ‘combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases’; ‘ensure environmental sustainability’; ‘reduce child mortality’; ‘improve maternal health’; and to build a ‘global partnership for development’ by 2015 in the world (United Nations, 2015). Based on insights gained from the MDGs, and with a renewed understanding of the importance of human well-being, environmental and ecological sustainability, and social inclusion, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations have started its journey in 2016 to end by 2030.

Despite its strong presence in many low-resource countries, the notion of development, however, has faced criticism, and alternatives to development have been sought (Escobar, 1995). Escobar says questioning the perceived benignity of development:

Development was – and continues to be for the most part – a top-down, ethnocentric and technocratic approach, which treated people and culture as abstract concepts, statistical figures to be moved up and down in the charts of ‘progress’ [...] It comes as no surprise that development became a force so destructive to Third World cultures, ironically in the name of people’s interests. (p. 44)

Having provided a brief background of development, I now discuss the relationship of language with development.

Language and Development

Access to literacy helps people to alleviate poverty and widen their socioeconomic opportunities (Street, 2001). In a similar line, language is growingly recognised as a conducive factor for development (Bamgbose, 2014; Djité, 2008; Romaine, 2013). Djité (2008, p. 91) argues that languages issues lie ‘at the heart of the education/development nexus and the current debate about the best way to achieve sustainable development’. In exploring the juncture of language with development, many scholars have emphasised that local languages are valuable for local productivity and sustainable development (Bamgbose, 2014; Bruthiaux, 2002; Djité, 2008). Bamgbose (2014), for example, viewing that informed participation of people is a key requirement for development programmes to achieve positive outcomes, urges on the importance of using the language for reaching out to people that they are proficient in.

In addition to the above explorations, globalization and the neoliberal world economy have also made people increasingly associate language with economic

value (Heller, 2013; Rassool, 2007). Neoliberalism, which is enacted primarily in free market trade and where society is marketised for maximizing the profit (Shin & Park, 2016), proposes that the self is ‘a bundle of skills in which individuals invest in a rational and calculating way’ (Block & Gray, 2016, p. 3) so that they ‘can be marketed for productivity’ (Shin & Park, 2016, p. 5). Language is seen as playing a key role in the neoliberalism-induced development of skills—an essential component of human capital (Kubota, 2011; Rassool, 2007). International development agencies such as the World Bank or the Asian Development Bank are also influenced by the neoliberalist development principles and urge on the development of exchangeable skills including language skills among individuals for the economic growth of global Southern countries (Georgeou, 2012).

English for Development Discourse: Views and Counterviews

Owing to its global status, English is growingly viewed as a ‘capital’ which can contribute to people’s social and economic well-being in a diverse range of contexts, including by paving their access to higher education and employment (Coleman, 2010, 2011; Erling & Seargeant, 2013; Rasool, 2007). Because of this economic potential, the premium of the language is also considered to be high at the national level, and large-scale systematic promotion of the language for the development of countries in the Global South gets increasingly visible (Erling & Seargeant, 2013; Rasool, 2007). This extension of English which Seargeant and Erling (2011) term ‘English as a language of international development’ commonly inspires states and external donors to position English highly in education and seek ways for English-mediated development across diverse sectors of the economy. Parallel with this, it is, however, important to keep in mind that considerable counter viewpoints are also available problematising any simplified generalisation of the English and development link. I first map out the major areas where the English language is attached with development and then present some of the counterarguments.

Several econometric studies have shown in recent times that English language skills can have a positive co-relationship with higher income (Azam et al., 2010; Kapur & Chakraborty, 2016). Azam et al., (2010, p. 15) argue that compared to no English proficiency at all, fluency in English increases the hourly wages to 34 per cent for men and 22 percent for women, and some proficiency in English increases the hourly income to 11 per cent for men and 10 per cent for women. Elsewhere, Kapur and Chakraborty (2016, p. 4) argue that if the possibility of learning English is decreased by 1 per cent, it minimises the weekly hourly wages by 1.6 per cent in West Bengal, India.

Proficiency in English along with computer literacy is argued to work as an exchangeable cultural capital in the present-day human capital-accentuated labour market (Rasool, 2007; Erling, 2014). Economic globalization and enhanced mobility increasingly require a large group of local people to use English in the workplace for presentations, correspondences, business deals, and international partnerships

(Focho, 2011). English, according to Ferguson (2013), also plays the gate-keeping role in public and private service jobs in global Southern countries, and the language is greatly demanded in service-sector jobs.

Education is another area where English and development discourse seems to have a solid penetration. Education policies in the global Southern countries, inspired by strong parental ideologies as well as available claims by international development agencies linking English literacy to educational success, allocate a high position for English targeting national development (Ferguson, 2013). Low English proficiency is also considered to significantly obstruct higher education access in the global Southern contexts (Shamim, 2011).

A strengthened platform of English is considered beneficial for global Southern countries to upscale their human capital profile, build regional and international trade networks, attract foreign direct investment (FDI), and strengthen their knowledge and capacity bases (Coleman, 2010, 2011; Erling, 2014; Rassool, 2007, 2013; Seargeant & Erling, 2011). Rassool (2013, p. 60) considers that higher English proficiency has provided India with a better competitive advantage in business processing outsourcing and also in other sectors than China, a country which is considered to lag behind India in terms of English proficiency standards. Elsewhere, Negash (2011) considers that English is relevant for the entertainment and media industry, diplomacy, migration, commerce, and tourism of African countries.

The counter-discourses of English for development can be started with a view that English cannot be exclusively separated from other intervening variables such as gender, locality, caste, race, and education in the labour market, making a possible co-relationship between English and higher-income complex and mystified (Azam et al., 2010; Coleman, 2010). At a broader level of the national economy, Arcand and Grin (2013), following an econometric procedure where Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita was considered as an indicator of economic development and average TOEFL score as the level of English knowledge, consider that in post-colonial countries, English competency hardly has any relationship with economic development.

The link between proficiency in English and employability has been argued by several scholars as complex rather than straightforward or simple (Kubota, 2011; Park, 2011). Imam (2005) argues that a better level of English proficiency does not confirm secured good quality jobs because such jobs are rather limited in number and their occupancy is confirmed by greater political power rather than English language proficiency. Park (2011, p. 453) argues that the promise of English in the Korean job market is an 'illusion' because what qualifies as 'good English language skill' is subject to continuous deferment which requires the workers to continuously improve their proficiency and to synchronize their social ideology.

Over emphasis on English in education aiming for national development is a heated area of controversy and criticism in the global Southern countries (see Djité, 2008; Romaine, 2013). Bruthiaux (2002, p. 292), lamenting the fact that the English language is increasingly connected with development by government, academics, and media, says that 'language education for economic development need not be synonymous with English language education'. Phillipson (2014) criticises the role

of the World Bank saying that they incessantly circulate the notion that children should learn English as part of basic literacy to access and operate in the global economy. He says '[s]uch mantras build on no scholarly evidence and exclusively serve Western purposes of global domination and exploitation' (Phillipson, 2014, p. 865).

The promotion of English for development can also be seen to be politically interrogated. Phillipson argues that while in the nineteenth century, English was more connected with British colonialism, it gradually became more associated with British neo-colonial expansion and now more in the positivist line of applied linguistics, the language is promoted in the global South as a value-free neutral means of international communication, development, and a language providing equal rights to everyone (Phillipson, 1992, 2016). Pennycook (1994, p. 157) perceives this as an attempt to counterbalance the socio-political implications of the spread of English by creating 'appeal to market forces and the technical domain of service industries'. Another line of argument is that ELT projects often promote English without taking much account of the local socioeconomic, cultural and sociolinguistic circumstances (Erling & Seargeant, 2013; Kabel, 2016; Phillipson, 1992, 2016; Tupas & Tabiola, 2017). Tupas and Tabiola (2017) give an example of a USA funded project in Mindanao, Philippines which promoted a monolingual native model of English as a superior transformational force for the local populations largely overriding the local multilingual ecologies and ideologies.

Having reviewed different viewpoints of English and development at some length, which appear to be complex and unresolved, I now turn to Bangladesh—a country where English for development activities can be growingly observed.

English and Development in Bangladesh

Socio-political and Linguistic Profile

Bangladesh achieved independence in 1971 following a war with Pakistan (the then West Pakistan), commonly known as the War of Liberation (*Muktijuddho*). It has a total population of 163 million who live in its land area of 143,998 sq. km., making it one of the most densely populated countries in the world (World Bank, 2019). The literacy rate for people aged 15 or above is nearly 75 per cent (UNESCO, 2019). The country has achieved considerable economic growth in recent times, making it rise to the rank of a lower middle-income country in 2015 from its previous position of a low-income country. However, the country still ranks 133 out of 189 countries in the Human Development Index of UNDP (2020a), with worries present in the areas of poverty, good governance, and climate change amongst others (Riaz & Rahman, 2016).

Bangla is the national language of Bangladesh which is spoken widely in the country, and the language is strongly connected to the political and cultural history

of the nation. The Language Movement in 1952 was instrumental to establish Bangla as one of the state languages which built the foundation for the subsequent fight for independence in 1971. The newly independent country, charged-up by the spirit of linguistic nationalism, (hyper) accentuated Bangla and relegated English from different walks of life (Hamid & Erling, 2016). In education, for example, Bangla replaced English as medium of instruction at all levels including higher education. In addition, English was withdrawn as a compulsory subject to be studied at universities. The ‘Bangla Introduction Law’ of 1987 which was decreed for using Bangla at all domains including judiciary and administration is perhaps another example of the nationalist promotion of Bangla, crystallising a competitive tension between Bangla and English. This nationalistically induced project of promoting Bangla subduing English was, however, neither very successful nor sustainable, and it also created a public–private division in the society in terms of access to resource and language (Hamid & Erling, 2016; Rahman, 1991). Today, despite the nationalistic public discourses sporadically unsettling the language, English, owing to its strong link with globalization processes, enjoys a solid position as the most widely understood foreign language in Bangladesh. There are also more than 30 indigenous and non-indigenous languages spoken in the country (Hamid & Erling, 2016), sustaining the linguistic vitalities of ethnic minorities. Arguments are available that nationalistic dominance of Bangla marginalises the linguistic agencies of the speakers of those languages, perpetuating language-based deprivation and inequality in the society (e.g. Hamid & Erling, 2016; Sultana, 2021). Sultana (2021) presents a recent study where her indigenous ethnic minority participants exhibited greater preference for English than Bangla with regards to protecting their language ecology and rights.

English, ELT and Development in Bangladesh

English language teaching in Bangladesh is centrally shaped by the discourse of English for economic development. The folk ideologies of English in the country, perhaps contributed by the global status of the language as well as the British colonial history of the region, are considered to be strong in that English is often seen as a ladder to uplift people’s socioeconomic circumstances (Hamid & Erling, 2016; Seargeant, Erling, Solly, & Chowdhury, 2017b). Such individual ideologies are also well complemented at the national level where English language education is closely aligned to national development agenda. The Bangladeshi state, for example, after a long abstention from English after the independence, intensified its English education policy in the 1990s to widen its chances to access the globalized economy. This includes making English compulsory to learn from level 1 to level 12 despite the limited availability of resources to sustain such an initiative (Hamid, 2011). The strongest force in English for development promotion in Bangladesh seems to be the external donors who have decisive involvement with local ELT policies and pedagogies and who promote that an essential role of ELT in Bangladesh is to support the national growth of Bangladesh (Erling, 2017). Seven ELT projects ran in Bangladesh

since the independence including English Language Teaching Improvement Project (ELTIP) and English in Action (EIA), funded by international donor agencies such as Asian Development Bank (ADB) or United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DfID), which equated ELT innovations with educational development, human capital upscaling and national economic progress (Erling, 2017). ELTIP, for example, introduced Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in Bangladesh in early 2000s, replacing the long tradition of Grammar-Translation Method, to enhance the English communicative skills of the Bangladeshis to meet the perceived national and global demands for development. However, ambivalence and interrogation on the readiness, process, and achievement of this shift are not scarce (see Ali & Walker, 2014; Hamid & Baldauf, 2008). English in Action (EIA) (2008–2017) is the most recent and biggest example of English for development project in Bangladesh which through technology-based English teacher education programme and improvement of people's communicative skills, wanted 'to increase their English language skills that will help them access better economic and social opportunities' (English in Action, 2017, para. 3).

Under the influence of these consolidated flows of English for development, but particularly the EIA project, the development potential of the English language can be seen to be increasingly explored in Bangladesh across diverse socioeconomic sectors. Erling, Seargeant, Solly, Chowdhury, and Rahman (2013) report based on a study in rural Bangladesh that most of their participants considered English useful to participate in the global economy, to avail jobs, to go to foreign countries to work and to access information in the local economy. *English in Action* baseline studies also inform that 84% of their 8300 surveyed participants wanted to learn English, and 87% believed that learning English links to economic well-being (English in Action, 2009). English language proficiency is also argued to play an important role in the formal employment sector of Bangladesh (Khan & Chaudhury, 2012; Quader, 2015). Khan and Chaudhury (2012, p. 118) say that English plays the gate-keeping role not only in corporate jobs but also in public jobs including Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) ones. International economic migration, because of its important role in the economy of Bangladesh and the global nature of its operation, is another area where the economic value of English is explored. Seargeant et al. (2017), based on the perceptions among a cohort of the Bangladeshi returnee economic migrants to the Middle East, report that English has significant functional value for the Bangladeshi migrant workers, although this value depends on factors like contexts, domains, interlocutors of communication, and the other languages in the Middle East, especially Arabic.

Not just favorable perspectives as above, critical views can also be found, problematising the development-aimed promotion of English in Bangladesh. To begin with, the positive ideologies of English among the local Bangladeshis, which work as a strong motivating force for the state and the donors to promote the language, should not be overgeneralised. Chowdhury (2022) shows, based on a linguistic ethnography in rural Bangladesh, that his participants in a Qawmi madrasa resist economic development, western development programmes and the discourse of English as language of economic development. The study finds that such views are considerably shaped

by their alignment to spirituality as well as Arabic. Elsewhere, Imam (2005) cautions that uncritical identification with English to connect with the flows of globalization and development is competitive, if not conflictive with the national identity formation of the Bangladeshis. She also says that the local Bangladeshis should not be given the ‘false hope’ that learning English can automatically open economic opportunities for them. Another issue which has been taken up by several authors is that English creates inequality in terms of access and gain accrued by knowing English in the Bangladeshi society (Hamid, 2011; Imam, 2005; Rahman, 2015).

Chowdhury and Erling (2021a), based on two studies in Bangladesh, that they were involved with (Erling et al., 2013, 2015) raise some questions about English and development in Bangladesh. They say that some of the perceived needs of English (e.g. reading pesticides instructions) to access information among their rural Bangladeshi participants are rather basic educational needs in Bangla (also see Erling et al., 2013). Moreover, they reflect that their participants in rural Bangladesh, in some cases, instead of viewing English as a language, might have viewed it synonymously with education. They also say, referring to Coleman (2011), that it is difficult to say whether their participants have real English language needs, or they view English ‘as a panacea or a magic wand to their structurally embedded struggles and hardships’ (Chowdhury & Erling, 2021a, p. 405). Elsewhere, Erling, Chowdhury, Solly, and Seargeant (2018), and Chowdhury and Erling (2021b), based on their study among the returnee Bangladeshi migrant workers to the Middle East, argue that the link between English language skills and economic gain is not straightforward; rather is dependent on various structural entanglements including global inequalities, and there are different social and psychological costs of economic migration as well. They, therefore, question, referring to Sen (1999), whether (English) language skills can enhance the capabilities of the Bangladeshi migrant workers in the Middle East.

The success that ELT projects such as *English in Action* claim to have achieved can also be scrutinised more critically. Hamid and Jahan (2020) argue from a post-truth theoretical orientation that the ‘beneficiary success stories’ that the English in Action project boasts in their website and other virtual platforms (e.g. Facebook) embellish the brand image of the project but there is little evidence of ‘how the storied success corresponds to the degree of change that may have been achieved on the ground’ (Hamid & Jahan, 2020, p. 1).

In sum, Bangladesh experiences external donor led promotion of English which seems to be increasingly intensified, but some counter viewpoints are also available which question this promotion.

Conclusion

English is growingly promoted as a language of economic development in the global Southern countries, and Bangladesh with one of the largest English learning populations in the world is significantly affected by this discourse. It is in this context that I tried to map the broad terrains of development, language and development, and

English and development in order to draw relevant insights and seek future directions concerning ELT and development in Bangladesh. Bangladesh has achieved considerable economic growth in recent times. Creating export-based employment for its large job-entering young populations is considered by The World Bank (2019) as the key to accelerate and sustain the economic growth of Bangladesh in the age of globalization. With the growing importance of language skills in the present service and knowledge-based global neoliberal economy, Bangladesh also seeks avenues to harness its linguistic profile. English, backed by the global eminence of the language, its popularity at the local folk level, and the active interests of external donors to promote it, plays a hegemonic role in this aspiration. However, we need to understand the various dimensions and layers of English and development employing diverse theoretical and empirical perspectives. To this end, it seems relevant to keep in mind in the first place that the very notion of ‘development’, despite its popularity and penetration in many global Southern quarters, does not evade political interrogation (Escobar, 1995). In addition, views are available that language and development explorations should also take an inclusive approach by taking on board the diverse linguistic agencies of people in order to keep a locally meaningful impact (Bamgbose, 2014; Djité, 2008). English and development discourse, as I have discussed, is also not settled. English is considered to be relevant for formal employment and higher education and to linguistically support the global Southern countries to gather benefits from the globalized economy—a view which has resulted in a large-scale donor-funded promotion of the language for development. However, counter-discourses are available problematising any simplified link between learning English and socioeconomic gain drawing on various economic, educational, structural, and political viewpoints. Moreover, the benignity of ELT projects promoting English as a language of economic development is interrogated, viewing that such projects benefit the political and economic interests of the donors largely sweeping over the local realities (Kabel, 2016; Tupas & Tabiola, 2017). In the national context of Bangladesh, a strong state and donor collaborated promotion of English can be observed, but critical views are not uncommon pointing to some of the loopholes of this promotion on grounds of national identity formation, national socioeconomic affordances or social, global, and structural inequalities amongst others.

ELT in Bangladesh needs to exercise its critical agency to understand and address meaningfully the process and mechanism of English for development promotion. This includes building a systemic and locally responsive understanding of the value of language skills including English for national development, adopting a multilingual approach. In addition, political awareness of the underlying processes of hegemonic ELT interventions including English for development also seems significant. Edge (2016) says, ‘it is no longer credible (if it ever was) to teach EFL and blinker out the political impact of the large-scale endeavour to which one contributes’ (pp. 232–33). Several scholars (e.g. Kabel, 2016; Phillipson, 2016), as discussed before, argue that external donor-funded ELT projects often ignore local social, political, economic or cultural realities in their broad-brush promotion of English. This puts the responsibility on the shoulders of the local ELT to claim and valour the ‘local’ while not necessarily opposing the ‘global’, but rather creating a critical space of

‘glocal’. Ritzer (2003, p. 193) defines glocalization as ‘the interpenetration of the global and the local, resulting in unique outcomes in different geographic areas.’ Glocalization does not view the ‘local’ and the ‘global’ in dichotomous opposition; it rather believes in a ‘blend’ of the two (Robertson, 1995; Roudometof, 2005). It promotes heterogeneity instead of viewing the global processes as homogenisation of Western/American economic, political, and cultural forces in the world (Ritzer, 2003). ELT in Bangladesh needs to be more locally situated to address sensitively heterogeneous and complex local linguistic, educational, and developmental realities instead of naively embracing any unwarranted global/western ideology or pedagogy. It needs to ask critically whose interests and agendas are being served by the ideology that they endorse or the pedagogy that they practise or promote. Uncritical celebration of English as a language of economic gain, without engaging with the theoretical, critical, and political dimensions of this discourse, will enhance the susceptibility of local ELT to hegemonic ELT ideological or pedagogical interventions, unjustifiably neglecting local language and development priorities.

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Chapter 3

Students' Uptake of Translanguaging Pedagogies and Translanguaging-Oriented Assessment in an ELT Classroom at a Bangladeshi University



Abu Saleh Mohammad Rafi

Abstract The chapter presents findings from a focus group discussion of English-major students who participated in a translanguaging pedagogical intervention in an English Language Teaching (ELT) classroom of a Bangladeshi private university. The focus group consisted of six students, of whom four students had studied in Bangla medium and two in English medium in their pre-tertiary education. These students compared their learning and assessment experience of the translanguaging intervention with traditional ELT pedagogies. They reflected on how translanguaging pedagogies could solve the problems they encounter in traditional ELT classrooms. The analysis of focus group data revealed that the English medium instruction policy discriminated against Bangla medium students vis-à-vis their English medium counterparts in terms of understanding lectures and remaining motivated. Such consequences negatively impacted their psychological well-being and socio-cultural identification as English majors. In contrast, translanguaging pedagogies provided students with a comfort zone catering to their diverse proficiency levels, aided their understanding of ELT materials and better prepared them for assessment. Furthermore, the intervention tapped into students' sociolinguistic awareness about how English-only practices affected their academic Bangla proficiency, an essential skill in real-life contexts. The chapter concludes by shedding light on the challenges a translanguaging pedagogical approach might face to emerge as an education policy in the particular ELT context.

Keywords ELT · Medium of instruction · Translanguaging pedagogies · Assessment · Bangladeshi university

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Introduction

English language teaching (ELT) in the state sector of education in Bangladesh can be broadly divided into three distinct phases marked by the salience of Grammar-Translation Method (GTM), Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and the English in Action (EIA) project, respectively. Hamid and Baldauf (2008) critiqued the GTM phase as myopic for downsizing English to promote linguistic nationalism of Bangla, and the CLT phase as “short-sighted” since its promises to English weighed heftier than its ability to deliver (p. 16). The EIA phase has also been criticised for its lack of a contextually appropriate ELT policy (Ali & Walker, 2014). It can be argued that all previous educational efforts regarding English language teaching and learning were carried out from a perspective of traditional monolingualism and bilingualism that discounted the metalinguistic, cultural and intellectual resources students bring to ELT classrooms (Charalambous, Charalambous, Zembylas, & Theodorou, 2020). The term “translanguaging” has recently been proposed as a heteroglossic language ideology that disrupts traditional understandings of monolingualism, bilingualism and language education models (García & Kleyn, 2016).

The theories of translanguaging adopt “a fluid, dynamic view of language and differ from code-switching/mixing theories by de-centring the analytic focus from the language(s) being used in the interaction to the speakers who are making meaning and constructing original and complex discursive practices” (Lin, 2018, p. 5). As a pedagogical approach, translanguaging has been proposed for teaching multilingual students by encouraging them to utilise their entire linguistic repertoires to engage in academic learning (Cenoz & Gorter, 2017; García & Leiva, 2014; García, Johnson, & Seltzer, 2017).

The current chapter presents findings from a study that applied a translanguaging pedagogical approach in an ELT classroom of a Bangladeshi private university. One of the significant problems in ELT in Bangladesh is the absence of collaboration among different stakeholders, such as teachers, students, syllabus designers, curriculum planners, materials developers and methodologists (Ali & Walker, 2014). The chapter provides a student perspective on how a translanguaging pedagogical approach can contribute to such collaboration and address the challenges of teaching and learning English catering to the contextual, socio-cultural and linguistic needs of all parties involved in a traditional ELT classroom.

To this end, the chapter reviewed existing scholarship of translanguaging and then presented the methodological approach, along with the results and discussion shedding light on the implications for policy and practice in the focal and related ELT classroom contexts.

Literature Review

Williams (1996) proposed the term translanguaging in Welsh bilingual education programmes to introduce a language teaching approach that provides input in one language or mode (e.g. spoken) and requires output in another (e.g. written). Recent developments in sociolinguistics adopted translanguaging to define bilingual performances and pedagogical approaches (Creese & Blackledge, 2010; García & Leiva, 2014; Rafi & Morgan, 2021, 2022a, 2022b). As performances, translanguaging refers to “the ability of multilingual speakers to shuttle between languages, treating the diverse languages that form their repertoire as an integrated system” (Canagarajah, 2011, p. 401). As pedagogical approaches, García and Kano (2014, p. 261) defined translanguaging as:

a process by which students and teachers engage in complex discursive practices that include ALL the language practices of ALL students in a class to develop new language practices and sustain old ones, communicate and appropriate knowledge, and give voice to new sociopolitical realities by interrogating linguistic inequality.

García et al. (2017) identified four purposes of translanguaging pedagogies: supporting students to engage with and enhance their comprehension of complex texts; providing opportunities for developing their academic language proficiencies; creating space for bilingual ways of learning; and supporting their bilingual identities and socioemotional development. Translanguaging pedagogies have often been considered “the best way to educate bilingual children in the twenty-first century” for didactic benefits (Beres, 2015, p. 103). Existing research demonstrated the advantages of translanguaging pedagogies across grade levels in terms of offering “communicative and educational possibilities to all” (García, 2009, p. 148), mitigating the problems for low proficient learners (Muguruza, Cenoz & Gorter, 2020); boosting participant confidence and motivation (Creese & Blackledge, 2010), developing “linguistic security and identity investment” (García, 2009, p. 157), maximising learning literacy skills (Hornberger & Link, 2012) and facilitating higher cognitive engagement in content-matter learning (Duarte, 2016).

The theories of translanguaging provide two ways of understanding language in assessment: *language-specific performances* in the named language—Bangla, English, Hindi or others and *general linguistic performances*. García and Kleyn (2016) elaborated these performances as follows:

We would be able to assess if a bilingual student uses the lexicon and linguistic structures of a specific-named language in socially and academically appropriate ways—the named language-specific performance. And we would be able to assess if he or she is able to perform linguistically to engage in academic and social tasks regardless of the language features used—the general linguistic performance. (p.25)

Alongside different strategies of translanguaging pedagogies, the study incorporated these two types of performances in the focal ELT classroom to offer an accurate assessment of what the students knew and could do with language. The traditional assessment asks bilingual students to suppress more than half of their linguistic repertoires while allowing their monolingual counterparts to benefit from their entire

linguistic repertoires in expressing what they know. In contrast, translanguaging-oriented assessment can promote equal educational opportunity and social justice, levelling the playing field between bilingual and monolingual students (García & Kleyn, 2016).

Although the benefits of translanguaging pedagogies are widely recognized in language scholarship and second language education, a translanguaging approach is still underexplored in Bangladeshi classrooms. A study by Rafi and Morgan (2021) applied translanguaging pedagogies in an academic writing skill development class of a Bangladeshi public university. Findings from this study challenged monolingual approaches to academic writing and transformed traditional exercises that are limited solely to the target language. The purposeful use of translanguaging and contents suited to students' local language(s) and their experiences were useful for opening up possibilities for cross-linguistic analysis, promoting metalinguistic awareness and a more in-depth understanding of rhetorical language conventions across cultures. In a teacher education domain, Rafi (2020) explored the shortcoming of administering translanguaging without a pedagogic focus in an English literature classroom of a Bangladeshi private university. Other studies on translanguaging practices extended our understanding of such practices from the Bangladeshi context but did not have an explicit pedagogic focus or design (see, e.g. Rahman & Singh, 2021; Sultana, Dovchin, & Pennycook, 2015). Hence, the current study was designed to add to the limited number of studies that applied translanguaging pedagogies in Bangladeshi classrooms and present student perspectives on such approaches drawing evidence from an ELT classroom.

The Study

The current study is part of a doctoral research project that investigated the potential of translanguaging pedagogies in humanities and social sciences classrooms across four universities. All participating individuals and institutions of the project have been de-identified to conform with the ethics approval protocols of the researcher's institution. This chapter draws on data from a study in the first-year classroom of the English department at the Bangladeshi University of Excellence (BUE). BUE is a private university that administers English medium instruction policy across disciplines. Nonetheless, it enrolls students from diverse pre-tertiary medium backgrounds such as Bangla medium, English medium, Madrassa or Islamic education and newly introduced English version. In contrast to mainstream English medium schools, which follow the University of London's General Certificate of Education (GCE) or the Senior Cambridge curriculum and O/A level examinations, the English version is a parallel stream to the Bangla medium, catering to the same national curriculum and school-leaving examination but through the medium of English (Rafi & Morgan, 2022b).

The researcher conducted a pedagogical intervention in the teacher's regular classroom to introduce the participants to translanguaging pedagogies. The intervention

comprised reading one Bangla and two English texts on the colonial construction of beauty, with the primary goal of improving the English reading comprehension of the students. It lasted an hour and a half. Table 3.1 demonstrates how the intervention was designed.

Alongside the intervention, the datasets for the study comprised classroom observations, a semi-structured interview with the focal teacher and a focus group discussion with students. While the chapter draws references from all datasets to generate broader themes, it mainly addresses the data from the focus group discussion. The focus group consisted of six students. Among them, Rupa, Sathi, Sohel, and Rubel studied in Bangla medium in their pre-tertiary education, while Mim and Antu studied in English medium and English version, respectively. The focus group discussion lasted for 37 minutes. Students were provided with a language-comfort approach to share their opinions about newly introduced translanguaging pedagogies. Throughout the focus group discussion, they translanguaged or spoke Bangla or English as per

Table 3.1 Translanguaging strategies in the intervention

Phases	Activities
Phase 1: Translanguaging theory and pedagogical approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduced the translanguaging theory of education • Briefed on the strategies of translanguaging pedagogy
Phase 2: Tell me now activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carried out an activity comprising a picture of five young people and three questions
Phase 3: Reading the first English text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided an English definition of beauty • Explored cognates of the proverb “Beauty is in the eye of the beholder” across languages and cultures • Provided Bangla scaffolding for difficult words in the text • Used a photo of a Bangladeshi actress to connect with English text • Completed the reading of the first English text <p>Researcher–student interaction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is this text about? • Do you agree with this author? Why/Why not?
Phase 4: Reading a Bangla text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used the Bangla text as a guided reading • Reflected on the struggle of Bangladeshi parents to get their dark-skinned daughters married off • Asked students’ opinions on the messages of the text
Phase 5: Reading the second English text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided scaffolding for difficult words • Paraphrased to enhance students’ access <p>Researcher–student interaction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is this passage about? Do you agree with this author? If so, please share • What do you think beauty is?
Phase 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducted two sets of multiple-choice questions orally

their preferences and needs. The researcher asked the questions in English, provided Bangla translation and translanguaged to facilitate the discussion. However, this chapter presented only English translations of the direct quotations from the focus group for mutual understanding of the international readers.

Saldaña's (2015) "versus coding" was employed to draw a thematic analysis of the focus group data. This particular coding method allowed the researcher to identify the conflict, struggle and power issues in several dichotomous codes, such as English vs Bangla, monolingualism vs translanguaging, English medium students vs Bangla medium students, teachers vs students and expectations vs reality. Analysis of these codes generated three major themes that have been discussed in the following section.

Results and Discussion

Student Perspectives on Traditional ELT Classrooms

The lack of English proficiency to cope with the English medium instruction (EMI) and ELT materials has been reported as the central problem in ELT classrooms. Students do not possess the required proficiency to understand English-only lectures and access ELT materials. They also hesitate to ask questions in English for clarification if they fail to understand a concept. Those who understand the lecture might also struggle to organise and communicate their ideas in English. Only a few students who have decent English proficiency due to English medium backgrounds in pre-tertiary education can perform satisfactorily in such an English-only monolingual environment. Teachers also support these proficient students and impose English-only directives on others. Such strict implications of EMI policies silence most students who need to access their complete linguistic repertoires for making sense of ELT contents. As Rupa, a student, stated:

Sometimes, we feel so insecure about what kind of reaction we would receive if we confess to the teachers that we do not understand their English lecture. So we choose to remain silent. Those who have good proficiency continue to do well in the class, and we lag.

As can be seen, the linguistic requirement of English-only practices creates an environment of discrimination and privilege for different student groups. The English medium or version students dominate most Bangla medium students in classroom performances. Both English medium students said in the focus group discussion: "*We are okay with both English and Bangla*", although they continued conversing in English. This tendency of speaking only English also intimidates Bangla medium background students in classroom practices; several students mentioned it in the focus group discussion.

Despite the psychological pressure in the classroom discourse, Bangla medium background students also deal with outside pressure from family, friends, and social circles for their affiliation with the English department in an international context.

The English departments in Bangladeshi universities assume English as a *lingua franca* or natural condition inside and outside classroom activities and design their curricula following a native speaker model of English (Rafi & Morgan, 2021, 2022a). For example, the focal teacher taught reading comprehension passages directly from IELTS preparation books without adapting the materials as per her students' needs. In first-year classrooms, the departments also teach English (language) poetry of representative poets of the early modern period to the twentieth century. Students in these classrooms face the concurrent challenge of acquiring the language and mastering the content knowledge. To tackle such challenges, the departments require students to obtain higher scores in English subjects taught in pre-tertiary education as admission criteria. Interestingly, those scores contribute to the public perception that English majors possess superior English proficiency for their interactions with complex English literature and linguistics texts. In reality, as one example, the current study demonstrated that these scores neither meet the required proficiency to deal with course materials nor cater to the perceptions English departments intentionally or unintentionally project about their students. The incongruence between social expectation and linguistic reality puts enormous pressure on students and affects their psychosocial development, as seen in the following comment by Rupa:

If someone knows that I study in the English department, they think I know a lot about English. If they ask a question and we cannot answer correctly, they criticise us severely. Too much criticism! As if we are unfit for studying in the English department.

These double-dimensional pressures within and beyond the classroom discourse ultimately affect the self-esteem of the students. The lack of necessary English language skills reduces their motivation and interest. They doubt their potential, and many suffer from depression for fear of dropping out of the courses. The following reflection from Sathi demonstrated an instance about the process of how the English-only approaches affect the psychosocial development of ELT students:

Many students seem to suffer from depression. They think: "I am not coping well. It's probably not possible for me"- these kinds of worries strike them. When they see their other classmates (English medium) speak fluently, but they cannot form a single sentence, they obsess over it even after returning home. This whole process is depressing and detrimental to our mental health and well-being.

Such strong manifestation of English in Bangladeshi social and educational contexts has been compared with the metaphor of a "white elephant" consuming precious national resources, time and money without producing any desirable results (Hamid & Baldauf, 2008).

Returning to the focal classroom of the study, the analysis of classroom observation and interview data revealed that the teacher was aware of her students' linguistic needs, related suffering and adverse outcomes of EMI. She informed that the university enrolls students from diverse pre-tertiary education mediums, resulting in a classroom environment comprised mixed proficiency level students. Hence, she did not always impose English on her students but maintained language separation in her pedagogical approaches to conform to the EMI policy, at least on her part. As a

result, the focal ELT classroom featured different degrees of translanguaging practices in students' discourses. Nevertheless, these translanguaging practices were not guaranteed nor pedagogically manipulated. Furthermore, in the interview, the teacher expressed tension, hesitation and guilt for allowing students to translanguauge, disrupting the existing EMI policy. As a result of being embedded in the teacher's "system of disempowering instructional supports", naturally occurring translanguaging practices did not meet students' interpersonal and emancipatory goals as translanguaging was not a symmetrical practice for both parties (Allard, 2017, p. 123). The following section discusses the qualitative difference the intentional pedagogy of translanguaging made in the focal classroom.

Students' Uptake of Translanguaging Pedagogies in an ELT Classroom

The analysis of focus group discussion data as one example revealed how translanguaging pedagogies could potentially eradicate fear, hesitation, uneasiness and all sorts of inhibitions that result from the language barrier in ELT classrooms. Translanguaging pedagogies provided all student groups with a language-comfort approach catering to their specific needs in English and Bangla and promoted active engagement with the texts. The purposeful selection of Bangla text connected students' cultural and social worlds with the class materials and aided their understanding of complex English texts. The strategic incorporation of translanguaging practices alongside specific-named languages aligned the classroom ecology to the linguistic realities of students' lives and brought back their "authentic voices" in the pedagogic discourses that were previously silent in the ELT classroom (Kiramba, 2016, p. 115). Most importantly, students gained a solid understanding of the lessons and enjoyed the pedagogical intervention. They felt confident in the intervention tasks. Rubel commented:

You taught us very well, and we enjoyed the class very much. It's not like that we did not understand the lecture and sat there in silence. ... that's why we could immediately participate in the quiz in English. It seemed effortless.

This comment might indicate that translanguaging pedagogies provided students with the agency over the learning process. They performed comfortably as thinkers and writers, drawing on their own language practices while also focusing on English acquisition (Ascenzi-Moreno & Espinosa, 2018).

The "translanguaging turn" to define multilingual ways of making sense of the world is yet to fully conceptualise the assessment domain (Creese & Blackledge, 2010; García & Kleyn, 2016; Rafi & Morgan, 2021). The intervention introduced the participants with translanguaging-oriented assessments through three writing tasks that could potentially transform traditional monolingual approaches of ELT. For example, task-1 involved general linguistic performances of students where they

were allowed to write regardless of the specific language features used in a particular named language such as Bangla or English. Sohel said:

We wrote well what we felt. If we were to write in only English, we would have failed to express so many things. Ideas that felt comfortable writing in English, we wrote those in English and followed the same process for Bangla.

This task levelled the playing field between the students who might have excellent English proficiency but demonstrate shallow understating of the content and the students who have great ideas but cannot express them in institutionally appropriate language conventions, i.e. academic English or Bangla. Incorporating general linguistic performances can promote reflexive, nuanced and high order thinking drawing on the critical elements (Chu, 2017). Assessing these performances can also provide an accurate assessment of students' understanding beyond the bias towards any named language (García & Kleyn, 2016; Rafi & Morgan, 2021).

The task-2 on language-specific performance in Bangla enabled students to write in their home language. Although the English medium background students previously stated that they were comfortable in English and Bangla, they felt nervous about their lack of practice in academic Bangla writing. They were concerned about Bangla grammar, word choice and spelling. Furthermore, their comments reflect a sense of insecurity regarding social bashing for first language attrition. Mim said:

We are not practising Bangla for quite a long time. Bangla has its own grammar. If we mistake, what would people say? We don't even know our own mother tongue!

Regardless of the pre-tertiary medium instruction, students valued Bangla proficiency in academic and public discourses. They usually tap into Bangla translation and background knowledge to understand a complex English text in the classroom context. In the public domain, Bangla is even more critical for the identity performances of the students. Antu argued, "*As we are Bengali, we should have proficiency in academic Bangla even if we do not have such skills in English*". In other words, task-2 tapped into students' sociolinguistic awareness, interrogated linguistic inequality in academia and brought critical queries around the collective identity and voice. Students became aware of the unintended or negative outcome of EMI on their home languages and saw the potential of translanguaging-oriented assessment in sustaining their academic Bangla proficiency (García & Kano, 2014).

The task-3 on language-specific performances in English ensured that students met the language requirement of an ELT course set by the English department. As per the course outline, the course enables students to "read short English texts and answer questions on contents of the text in English". The intervention met these objectives since students produced comprehensible responses in English (for examples of student works, read Rafi & Morgan, 2022a). They felt more supported through task-1 and task-2 and wrote monolingually in English in task-3. According to the students, the translanguaging pedagogies made a significant difference from the traditional ELT classrooms. Teachers teach English materials using English instruction in a conventional class and ask for direct composition in English from emergent bilingual students. Such monolingual approaches of English do not permit students sufficient time and space to understand and digest the received knowledge, organise their

thoughts and express ideas eloquently in English composition. These monolingual approaches also create a flawed understanding of students' conceptual development. For example, Rupa said:

We might have understood the topic but failed to write about it due to the lack of English proficiency. However, teachers think that we probably didn't pay attention to their lectures or studies at all.

In contrast, translanguaging approaches enabled them to develop a more robust understanding of the content; hence, they took less time writing the final product than regular classrooms. This finding converges with Turnbull (2019), who found that students engaged in translanguaging could produce more succinct, well-formed essays and score higher than those who were forced to write monolingually.

Students provided two kinds of feedback about incorporating these three types of performances in the centralised examination. Three students argued for acknowledging these performances in traditional ELT pedagogies and accommodating the assessment of these performances as problem-solving strategies for emergent bilingual students (Rafi & Morgan, 2022a). As reported, some students perform poorly or fail the course due to a lack of English proficiency despite having substantial knowledge. In such cases, tasks 1 and 2 can enable those students to cut some scores instead of a failing grade. Furthermore, academic writing in ELT classrooms often means stripping it off multilingual resources, knowledge and experience, hurting the writer's argument (Garska & O'Brien, 2019; Rafi & Morgan, forthcoming). In such cases, these tasks can demonstrate a fair understanding of students' overall knowledge and contribute to developing their bilingual identities since each language at their disposal had particular benefits in meaning-making and expression (Canagarajah, 2015; Lillis, 2001).

The other two students said they would not need tasks 1 and 2 in centralised examinations if translanguaging approaches are regularly incorporated in ELT classrooms. An immediate positive outcome of translanguaging pedagogy has been surfaced in Sathi's comment: "If today's topic was entirely in English, we could not have attended a quiz immediately after the lecture". Such a positive reaction to translanguaging pedagogies means its potential of ensuring quality content acquisition and language learning in the ELT classroom. It also means that if translanguaging pedagogies are administered throughout the semester, students will gain sufficient confidence to perform monolingually in English in the centralised examination. While these positive outcomes are consistent with previous research (Creese & Blackledge, 2010; García & Leiva, 2014), they also contradict the critical responses of a few student participants in Rafi and Morgan (2021), who argued for English monolingual approaches to education based on the assumption that English medium instruction is the best way to improve their English proficiency. The following section discusses the implications of the study's findings for policy and practices.

Implications for Policy and Practices

A translanguaging pedagogical approach in ELT classrooms has several important implications for existing policy and practices in the focal university as discussed below:

Translanguaging pedagogical approaches will cater to the needs of both Bangla and English medium background students. The hesitant Bangla medium students will be able to perform confidently in ELT classrooms benefiting from the strategic incorporation of translanguaging approaches such as translation, scaffolding techniques and guided reading through authentic Bangla texts. The English medium students will hone their academic Bangla proficiency. In other words, translanguaging pedagogies will offer communicative and educational possibilities for all student groups developing English language proficiency while sustaining academic Bangla (García, 2009; Kano, 2012).

The three-pronged assessment can curtail false impressions about students and present a holistic demonstration of their understanding and knowledge. Despite understanding ELT lectures, many students fail to articulate those ideas in examination scripts for the lack of English proficiency and often fail to pass the course. Teachers often blame those students for being “slack”, “weak” or “bad students”. Traditional assessment, strictly speaking, becomes an assessment of students' academic English, providing an incomplete picture of their comprehension and intellectual abilities as they draw on multilingual and multicultural resources and experiences (García & Kleyn, 2016). If administered in centralised examinations, translanguaging-oriented assessment can potentially reduce course dropout rates in private universities.

Translanguaging pedagogies will be beneficial for teachers as well. As reported above, teachers often struggle to make sense of ELT materials in English-only approaches. Subsequently, the importance of making lessons interesting for students remains overlooked. Adding perspectives from multiple languages and cultures would effortlessly broaden the spectrum of ELT materials, make the lectures relevant to students' lives and create enjoyable classroom moments (Rafi & Morgan, 2022a).

In any event, translanguaging pedagogical approaches are beneficial to all parties involved in ELT classrooms. Sathi, one of the focus group participants, said: “*Teachers encourage us to ask questions repeatedly if we don't understand something*”. Nevertheless, such encouragement sours the other group of high-performing students from English medium backgrounds. These students already understand English-only lectures and consider the additional support for low performing students as a waste of their time. Such negative vibes from peers also affect the self-respect of the students. Under those circumstances, translanguaging pedagogies will maximise linguistic support, provide students with a sense of ownership and confidence and place them as co-producers of knowledge (Makalela, 2015). In doing so, translanguaging pedagogies will reduce the instructional support otherwise needed in traditional ELT classrooms. According to the students, teachers would not have to provide the additional “counselling hours” for less performing students as required by the

existing policy since the students would sufficiently understand the lecture in regular class time.

Despite such manifold educational benefits, translanguaging as an education policy will face backlash from multiple stakeholders such as parents, friends and the overall post-colonial mindset of Bangladesh that fuel the common perception of English as the quality maker and fashion statement of higher education (Wang & Curdt-Christiansen, 2018). Parents will be disappointed if the university adopts a non-English medium of instruction. Mim said, *“They will criticise us, saying we will not send you to this university. We chose the university for its English medium education, but now they are teaching Bangla and English both”*. Such criticism lacks the awareness of the value of home languages in education. The English department would be the exclusive victim of such prejudices for its legacy of colonial past. Friends, peers and different social groups will look down on the degrees offered by the English departments if those are not taught in English. Rupa said:

They will say that you have studied everything in Bangla. They will not understand translanguaging pedagogies. Studying in the English department will not make any difference for them. We will ultimately lose the prestige we enjoy as English department students.

These views demonstrated how the social prestige of English and its association with English departments disregard the educational needs and practical problems of English majors. Under those circumstances, an ongoing research agenda needs to be developed focusing on how translanguaging can mitigate such perceptual challenges and allow students’ authentic voices through inclusive instruction of translanguaging pedagogies (Byrnes, 2020; Kiramba, 2016; Rafi & Morgan, forthcoming).

Conclusion

The findings of the study demonstrated the potential of translanguaging pedagogical approaches in creating a democratic space in a traditional ELT classroom that is inclusive of all students regardless of the previous medium of instruction background and varying English proficiency levels. Translanguaging pedagogies gave voice to the silenced students in the traditional ELT classroom without breaking the natural interaction flow for high-performing students. Furthermore, the strategic incorporation of natural translanguaging practices, Bangla text and writing tasks created scope for practising the language for students who are already victims of first language attrition due to English-only approaches to education. The pedagogic design comprising multiple languages broadened students’ perspectives on ELT materials. In doing so, translanguaging pedagogies transformed the traditional scripted curricula of ELT and created a dynamic environment for everyone. Despite such positive outcomes, a translanguaging education policy will face backlash from stakeholders for the lack of sociolinguistic awareness and biases towards English-only approaches. An ongoing research agenda is required to mitigate the oppositional challenges for the successful implementation of a translanguaging education policy in traditional ELT classrooms.

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Chapter 4

Culture in Language Teacher Education: A South Asian Perspective



Laxman Gnawali

Abstract English language teacher education in the EFL contexts reveals its culture-based paradox. The trainee teachers are inculcated with the nuances of social and cultural values of the BANA (Britain, Australasia and North America) countries: that pair/group work is a panacea for all communicative ills, and that the teachers should minimize their talks, are taken for granted. The training hall discourse establishes that the Western assumption of teacher learning is universal. Interestingly, at the same time, these teachers are encouraged to plan the lessons to fit their local context. The literature on culture and language learning establishes that local culture plays a significant role in learner engagement. Although there has been sporadic research on the place of local culture and teacher learning, language teacher education programmes are still BANA-centric. The above issue is very pertinent in the South Asian context that has a rich tradition of education with its own theories of pedagogy that cannot be ignored when it comes to language teacher education. Based on language teacher educator interviews and teacher education curricula analysis, this chapter presents the South Asian perspective on the place of culture in language teacher education programmes.

Keywords Culture · Language teacher education · South Asia

Introduction

The inclusion of target language culture has been highly valued in English as a foreign language (EFL) teaching. In fact, culture has been given a fifth skill status in addition to the four language skills learners develop (Altun, 2019; Tomalin, 2008). Scholars justify the need for the inclusion of cultural elements in foreign language teaching courses (e.g. Brown, 2000; Cortazzi & Jin, 1999; Kramsch, 2009; Tomalin, 2008). Tomalin (2008) contends that learning a foreign language happens at its best when the target language culture gets embedded in the content and process of learning. Brown

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(2000) sees language and culture as intricately connected in a way that we cannot separate them when we teach the language. Altun (2019) asserts in a straightforward manner that we cannot separate language and culture; learning one reinforces the other; in addition, without fully understanding culture, it is hard to acquire a language. Kramersch (2013), differentiating the learner and the target language as the Self and the Other, contends that "... to learn someone else's language is to perceive the world through the metaphors, the idioms and the grammatical patterns used by the Other, filtered through a subjectivity and a historicity developed in one's mother tongue" (p. 62). There seems to be a strong emphasis on the target culture in the foreign language teaching.

In consonance with this concept, English language courses in the EFL contexts have blended the target culture, the culture of the BANA countries in the content and the process. The use of textbooks produced in those countries or authored by native English speakers was given a higher value than locally produced textbooks until the 1990s. Unless it was made mandatory by the government regulations, the schools, colleges and language institutes in Nepal and other South Asian countries opted for such books over their home-grown counterparts. This practice continues. Textbook series such as *Language in Use* (Doff & Jones, 1997) and *Meanings into Words* (Doff, Jones & Mitchel, 1997) originally published in the UK have been reprinted in India for circulation within South Asia, as their covers mention. It is perhaps believed that the cultural nuances of the target language are properly represented and depicted in the contents in those books. For example, the expression "I'm starving. I could eat a horse" (Doff et al., 1997, p. 68) would possibly be written by a South Asian writer as "Rats are running in my stomach." This preference has a direct bearing on the classroom pedagogy as well. This needs to be dealt with in a culture-specific manner. As a response to this one-way flow of language and culture in materials and pedagogy, implicit and explicit arguments were made for the inclusion of the local culture in foreign language classrooms.

An issue on pedagogical culture was also raised by Kramersch and Sullivan (1996) arguing that "appropriate pedagogy" is linked with the "local appropriation" which is related to culture. They argued that the pedagogical approaches, as well as the materials developed in the UK or the USA, may be culturally comprehensible to the local learners in the EFL settings when the "local appropriation" takes place. Margana (2009) argued that integrating local culture in the English language classrooms not only promotes in students an awareness of their own culture but also enables them to appreciate global cultures. She presents practical techniques of how to integrate local culture in everyday teaching. Barfield and Uzarski (2009) state:

Integrating local indigenous culture into English language learning not only educates learners about indigenous people in their own countries and throughout the world; it also makes learning English more relevant for indigenous students in those classrooms. (p. 2)

Comprehension level goes high when learners are presented with the target language texts about their own familiar local culture contexts (Post & Rathet, 1996).

Suwal (2014) carried out a small study in a Newari community in Nepal and established that local culture plays a significant role in learner engagement and ultimate mastering of the target language. Based on her study in Indonesia, Mahardika (2018) concluded that incorporating local cultural materials reduces the stress level in students because they are familiar with these materials unlike with the target language materials.

This cultural awareness also led to the production of home-grown textbooks and materials with the inclusion of local culture elements in the teaching–learning materials produced locally in EFL contexts. Titles such as *New! Learning to Communicate* (Ram & Mason, 2014) produced in India are circulated across South Asia for their treatment of South Asian contexts. Elsewhere, Cahyati and Rahmijat (2017) examined eight textbooks produced in Indonesia and found that they included local values and culture relating to religion, customs and social practices. Referring to the ESL context like the USA, National Council of Teachers of English (2014) contends that “... the relevance of a work to students’ daily lives or the lives of their imagination is worthy of consideration in the [materials] selection process” (para 13). So, this alignment concept in relation to the selection of materials based on students’ daily lives has an implicit link to the local culture. These cultural elements in the teaching–learning materials require teachers to deliver the lesson in a culture-sensitive design. Peterson and Coltrane (2003) argue that language classroom environments should allow learners to develop intercultural awareness along with language skills. Therefore, there is a need for a pedagogy that treats culture as part of language learning in a way that the learners not only learn language and culture, but they learn them comfortably and with motivation. Regmi (2011) and Nambiarm et al. (2020) hold a common view that integrating the local culture reduces the foreignness of the language, makes it less threatening and increases the confidence level of students, thus ultimately improving their learning. When learning a foreign language (and culture) blends with looking into and articulating one’s own local culture, learners will develop cultural awareness, which means that they will be able to develop a better understanding of their own cultures, thereby developing a positive outlook and sensitivity to other cultures (Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2004, cited in Álvarez & Bonilla, 2009).

There have been interesting studies on the place of culture in the language classroom and their findings vary. A recent study conducted by Pham (2019) in Mekong Delta of Vietnam looking into the EFL tertiary teachers’ perceptions revealed a positive attitude of teachers to the integration of culture into English classes. The findings of the study that took culture in a general sense not specifying local or else showed that culture integration in the language classroom promotes multicultural communication among students. Önalán (2005) carried out a study in four Turkish Universities on English language instructors’ perceptions of the place of the British and American culture in the ELT classrooms. While the teachers perceived that integrating cultural elements is useful to enhance language learning, some of them “... seemed uncomfortable with inclusion of too much cultural information in that this ... could lead to linguistic/cultural imperialism. [Teachers] expressed concerns about students’ possibility of being overly sympathetic to US/UK culture” (p. 228). The findings indicate

that emphasis on target language culture may have some repercussions. A study on local culture integration conducted on teachers in Saudi Arabia by Khan (2014) concluded that "... [local] culture-based teaching leads to greater involvement of the target culture" and students "...feel integrated with the teaching in the class as they will feel comfortable from the perspective of local/home context" (p. 69). These studies point to the value of integrating local culture in English language education. It may be argued, therefore, that the EFL teacher education programmes should focus on training teachers to develop adequate understanding and skills so they can effectively integrate the nuances of the local cultures in their classroom teaching.

Culture and Teacher Training

That the teacher education and training programmes prepare teachers to address the cultural issues in English language pedagogy is crucial. Only when the would-be-teachers gain adequate exposure and understanding of how culture can and should be incorporated into the ELT materials and the classroom process while they are on the training course, will they be able to make the best use of the cultural elements making decisions in choosing the process and available materials. They will also be able to design and deliver lessons in a culture-responsive manner.

Literature justifies the use of target culture elements in the ELT classrooms, and the teacher training programmes such as CELTA, First Certificate and TEFL are also designed to equip teachers with adequate skills. Research and discussions have focused on the interface between language learning and culture (Holliday, 1994). However, the importance of local culture in teacher training and teacher learning has been emphasized by only a few scholars such as Badger and McDonald (2007), who contend that "... language teachers need to develop the competence to function in a range of cultural contexts and to be critically aware of the relationship between culture, context, and pedagogic practice" (p. 215). There is a dearth of research on teacher preparation for dealing with local culture in the ELT classrooms, particularly for adequately equipping the teachers with knowledge and skills for meaningfully treating local culture while teaching English. Only when training programmes are designed with informed decisions will they be able to inculcate in teachers a culture-sensitive pedagogy. This chapter is an attempt to fill the gap and contribute to English language teacher education, particularly in the South Asian context. It presents outcomes of a study on the South Asian perspective on the place of culture in language teacher education programmes drawing from teacher educator perspectives and teacher education curricula analysis. The study was guided by the following question: How do the English language education programmes in South Asia prepare teachers to incorporate local cultures in the ELT classrooms?

Method of Inquiry

The rich and long tradition of education of the South Asian region that has its own theories of teaching and learning cannot be ignored when it comes to language teacher education. This region has a significantly large number of English language teachers produced by hundreds of the teacher education institutions. As a teacher educator with insider knowledge of the region, I chose South Asia as the context of my study. Using purposive sampling, I identified one higher education institution from each of the eight South Asian countries (Nepal, India, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, the Maldives and Afghanistan), making sure that the institution had an English language teacher education programme well-known in the particular country. To maintain confidentiality, the institutions represented have been named in the format of the *University of [country]*, for example, *University of Nepal*, *University of Afghanistan* and so on, and the respondents are named as *the Faculty from Nepal*, *the Faculty from Afghanistan*, and such-like. I used my professional network to identify a teacher educator who had a significant role in the identified institution so they would provide relevant information as a respondent. After establishing contact with the respondents via email, telephone, or social media and obtaining consent, I sent them indicative themes/questions via email.

After completing the formalities, I made appointments and conducted interviews on Google Meet. Semi-structured questions were used for the interviews which were conducted in English, the only common language between the researcher and the respondents. However, the respondent from Nepal was interviewed in the Nepali language. The interviews with each respondent lasted nearly an hour. At the end of the interview, the respondents were requested to share the curriculum they were using for their training programmes. I received the requested documents from six countries except Bhutan and the Maldives. In both cases, the respondents asked their higher authorities for permission to share the documents, but their request was denied citing copyright issues even after I had explained to them via subsequent emails that no part of the curriculum would be lifted and only the observations would be made on the cultural elements used in the teacher training programmes. The communication with them was discontinued and the number of curricula was limited to six whereas the interviews were conducted with eight respondents.

After the interviews had been completed, I transcribed the data and tabulated them to see the patterns and to arrive at specific themes. I also went through the curricula to see how they incorporated, if any, components that would prepare teachers for dealing with local cultures in the ELT classroom. The focus was given on courses that dealt with the methods and materials of teaching English. The data analysis was based on the themes that partly surfaced from the data and were partly pre-empted. The findings are presented and discussed under two broad themes: local culture in the training curriculum, and local culture in the training practices.

Local Culture in the Training Curriculum

In order to explore the culture-specific contents in the training curriculum, I went through the documents looking for any content that mentions local culture elements. In doing so, I scanned through courses that dealt with the teaching methodology with one question in mind: What cultural elements are mentioned in the particular course? This section outlines the outcomes with specific examples from the available documents.

The Master's curriculum from the University of Bangladesh includes two separate courses on methods and materials for ELT. An analysis of the contents of the curriculum shows that the methods course includes the mainstream ELT methods from the grammar translation method to the communicative approach to language teaching. It also includes a section on the prospects and challenges of implementing these methods and approaches. The course on materials includes the concepts of syllabus design, materials development, and adaptation and makes an explicit contention in the introduction that "raising awareness about culturally sensitive TESOL material development is equally important." In the content outlines, the course includes the phrase "societal factors, cultural factors, political factors" that need to be considered in materials selection. It appears that one course mentions cultural concern but does not specify the focal culture. The methods course is silent on the cultural perspectives. When it comes to the reading list, all the books are mainly published in the UK, as shown in the excerpt below:

Reference textbooks

McGrath, I. (2002). *Materials Evaluation and Design for Language Teaching*. CUP.

Nunan, D. (1988). *Syllabus Design*. OUP.

Richards, J. C. (2001). *Curriculum Development in Language Teaching*. CUP.

Tomlinson, B. (2013). *Materials Development for Language Teaching*. Bloomsbury Academic.

White, R. (1988). *The ELT Curriculum: Design, Innovation and Management*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Malden, J. (1987). *Principles of Course Design for Language Teaching*. CUP.

The curriculum of the University of India aims to "familiarize the participants with the theoretical principles of language teaching methods" and lists the usual topics of teaching methods and materials. The course has no mention of culture or local context. The course could have been anywhere in the world. Although the course description (see the excerpt below) itself seems to be context-free, it does hint at the Indian context and culture.

Course Description

The aim of the course is to enable the participants build a theoretical and practical foundation of theories governing conventional and contemporary language teaching methods. The theoretical aspect focuses on explaining chief constructs and relevant literature in language pedagogy whereas the practical component introduces the learners to designing lesson plans based on principles and knowledge of learning objectives, assessment plans, methods, materials and learning activities. Additionally, the course provides an overview of materials used in the second language classroom and assessment of skills along with the components of language.

The curriculum from the University of Nepal aims at providing trainees with insights into the approaches and methods of ELT and includes heavy content encompassing major approaches and methods, learner issues, and classroom management. It also presents the techniques to teach four language skills. The document has phrases such as “critical pedagogy”, “the use of L1” and “analysing textbooks, curriculum/syllabus” which have a prospect for linking local culture, but there is no mention of how they will be dealt with. Apart from this, the culture concept does not appear in the course which can be seen in the objectives section (see below).

General Objectives

This course has following objectives:

- To acquaint the students with various aspects of language learners, teachers and teaching–learning activities.
- To familiarize the students with the fundamental concepts and principles of classroom management and teaching plans.
- To provide students with insights into understanding the approaches and methods of English language teaching.
- To prepare the students for teaching various aspects of the English language.
- To equip the students with the strategies for teaching language skills.
- To prepare the students in the use of various instructional materials and modern technology in the classroom.
- To enable the students to design the tools for language assessment.
- To familiarize the students with the concepts and approaches to English language teacher development.

The course titled “Teaching of English” included in the curriculum of the University of Pakistan covers the contents of language curriculum, teaching methods and assessment techniques. Aiming to develop skills in teachers to apply modern methods and approaches in the teaching of English, the course focuses on techniques of teaching language skills, teaching aids and lesson planning (see the excerpt below).

Again, this course does not bring any cultural content into view, let alone the local context. The training process as envisaged by the curriculum has a discourse pattern as if it were taking place in the UK.

Learning and teaching approaches

To make the Student Teachers independent users of language, it is essential to involve them in the learning process. The course requires an integrated approach to language teaching, which enables learning of all the four skills of language (i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing) in natural settings. The learning and teaching approach should be balanced so that Student Teachers learn about language and how to use English in different contexts. They are encouraged to respond through group and pair work as well as active learning strategies such as role plays, debates, presentations and brainstorming.

The curriculum of the University of Sri Lanka is distinct in making an explicit mention of the country in its objectives. As stated in the curriculum document, it aims to “bring participants up to date with significant developments in applied linguistics and related fields relevant to the teaching and learning of English in Sri Lanka.” The content outline includes four main content areas: Concept of method; mode of instruction in the language classroom; the development of the language skills in the ELT classroom and using the course materials. In the content details, three phrases relate to the local context: “critical evaluation of the above methods”, “specific issues in the Sri Lankan context” and “examining content in the textbook and workbook”. Though this curriculum stands out in bringing the local perspective by mentioning the name of the course, it does not say anything about the local culture or about how to deal with it when teaching English. However, this curriculum stands out in the sense that it mentions the name of the country in its aims as seen in the extract below.

Aims

1. To enable participants to understand various approaches to second language teaching.
2. To bring participants up to date with significant developments in applied linguistics and related fields relevant to the teaching and learning of English in Sri Lanka.
3. To assist participants in the construction of a conceptual framework for language teaching and learning, in order to relate and evaluate the pedagogical procedures and practices they encounter.
4. To provide participants with the skills and techniques essential for language teachers and trainers in the successful implementation of language policies in Sri Lanka.

The training curriculum of the University of Afghanistan could not be obtained. However, the Faculty from Afghanistan sent a course paper he had submitted to an Indian University. The paper analysed the Grade 10 textbook against the curriculum upon which the book was based. This paper includes two statements borrowed from the curriculum that show a cultural concern in its objectives:

The course develops an awareness of the link between language, religion and culture. It can help students and scholars to get knowledge about daily life, culture, religion, politics, science and the technologies developed in the English language and use the knowledge in the development of their country.

Though the curriculum itself could not be accessed, these statements indicate some concerns the curriculum designer had regarding culture. However, it can be determined only when the training curriculum can be obtained. Some of the topics in the English textbook of Grade X have cultural nuances such as *Going to Haj Pilgrimage, Pilgrimage Program, Dining Custom and Traditional Games*.

One possibility of incorporating the local context would be to include the books and articles written by the local writers and researchers in the list of prescribed or recommended readings. However, none of the curricula discussed above has a single reading written by authors from the South Asian region. All the recommended readings on ELT methodology include books from the BANA countries.

Local Culture in the Training Practices

The eight interviewees representing each of the eight South Asian countries were teacher educators. The interview questions were designed mainly to gain their perspectives and experiences as to how the training programme tries to inculcate ideas in teachers to incorporate the local cultural elements into the ELT classrooms. This section presents the findings and the interpretations.

The first interviewee was from Sri Lanka who was asked how the training curriculum that he delivers tries to develop understanding and skills in dealing with local cultures in ELT classrooms in Sri Lanka. He claimed that his university makes every effort to do so, hinting at the training session activities, as is evident in his comment:

I have been a teacher educator for the last 20 years. We make conscious efforts in our training programmes to include the elements of local culture. But I cannot say there is 100% success with this. There are problems. There are people who come with their specific stereotypes.

As he mentioned, the training participants came from different cultures and religions and were encouraged to work together and learn how to respond to other cultures. He narrated an incident:

They work very closely, and such collaboration is what I have noticed in Sri Lanka. In one of our programmes, we had 3 Tamil gentlemen and there were Singhalese, Tamil, and Muslim ladies. When we had an outing, I can remember how these three gentlemen cooperated with the women and helped them when needed.

He also claimed that they tried to use in their training sessions the reading texts from BANA countries as well as from Sri Lanka. To highlight his personal efforts, he explained how he tried to see the cultural elements in the ELT in Sri Lanka: “*Once presenting at the NELTA conference, about culture in English language teaching education in Sri Lanka, we analyzed our textbooks to see how much has been done and what remains to be done.*”

From his responses, we can deduce that the trainers in the Sri Lankan context are conscious of the value of teachers’ sensitivity to both local and international cultures. However, the methods and materials courses in the training do not mention any specific techniques to explicitly prepare teachers for incorporating local culture in the classroom where they will teach English.

In his response to the interview questions, the faculty from Bangladesh expressed a positive outlook towards local cultures. He feels that the values of the local cultures need to be inculcated in children in English classes and that the teachers need to be sensitized to this during the training. He commented:

I want teachers to be very proficient and efficient in language, and at the same time in culture as well. I do not expect prospective teachers to be effective while losing local cultures. If we value local cultures more and more, I am sure we will be more enlightened.

The teacher educator argued that although local culture enlightens the trainees, the training curriculum does not reflect what the faculty members believe. He also shared his awareness that such cultural sensitivity may not have been emphasized in all the training curricula in Bangladesh. He feels that all teacher training institutions need to hold dialogues to reach some consensus so there could be some uniformity in teacher training curricula. He remarked, “*We might have some missing links.*” He hinted at the differences between the institutions regarding the way they treat culture. However, his response did not allow spaces for subcultures within Bangladesh. This teacher educator shared the legacy of the language issue that changed the history of Bangladesh, and he claimed that the ELT community is sensitive about it. He explained,

Our language textbooks are designed in a way where local culture is strongly reflected for many reasons, for many years. Before liberation, maybe there were books with western influence, but now pedagogically we are living in a post-colonial, postmodern era, so the materials designers are more or less aware of it. They helped us pick up our own culture. You can find our textbooks on the internet.

However, he was sharing the patterns of the school textbooks, not of the training curriculum. The scenario in Bangladesh appeared to be similar to that of Sri Lanka.

The discourse about English in India appears that it inherited English and owns English as a distinct variety. Therefore, the way English is treated in ELT classrooms and training halls appears slightly different from other South Asian countries in that

English is seen more as a local rather than a foreign language. In response to the interview questions, the faculty from India claimed that the training programmes are designed with the local culture in mind:

Yes, generally they do! All carefully designed teacher education programmes need to be need-based and contextualised. Therefore, only after doing the needs analysis of the target group, the curriculum is planned. Since the teachers have better knowledge of their own culture, history, and religion, it is assumed that local culture must find a slot in the curriculum, and thereafter the materials are also planned or designed accordingly.

She began her response with a definite yes; however, the expression “*needs to be*” in the second sentence indicates she is supporting the idea but perhaps it is not happening. She continued in her style, “*I wouldn’t say this is something cut and dried. I say the base of the materials has to be from our own culture.*” She indicated that not all the training programmes would have the same patterns in practices but insisted that their materials, as well as practices, value the inclusion of local cultures. She mentioned a contribution she made which shows there is some sensitivity in the process, but it is not in the training programme and materials development.

In 2020, I was asked to write English textbooks for classes 6, 7, and 8 by the Punjab School Education Board and was also instructed to keep in mind the local context as well as the culture. I included a lot of activities and tasks which, I believed, teachers may be using in their online classes. So, after the books were launched, many teachers recorded their lessons delivered online to upload them on YouTube. Most of the lessons that I found on YouTube were taught in Punjabi having local flavour and seasoned by the Punjabi culture.

While her example illustrates how local cultures are dealt with in the teaching of English, it is not about training teachers. She rather points out that teachers are groomed to include the BANA cultures because many of them “*go to the UK and the US to obtain qualifications on various scholarships and bring the cultures there back with them. And this is what they teach in their teacher education programmes.*” Her responses show both ways: the training programmes are preparing teachers to import BANA cultures, and at the same time, making some efforts to help them to be sensitive towards the local cultures.

The responses from the participant from Pakistan brought a very different perspective. She emphasized that the teachers need to be trained to use the direct method, and she was unhappy that it is not happening.

English is taught in Urdu. So, the concept of how English is taught, what methods are used. Even though the teachers are trained, they don’t use that pedagogy like group work and pair work. Those cannot be used, because even though the teacher wants to do it, the principal doesn’t allow it. You are not sure how teachers will implement their new knowledge and skills in the classroom. The training agencies don’t have the time to follow up. They do not know whether what they focus on in their training is implemented at all. It’s a vicious circle.

She put stress on implementing the way the training is delivered in the BANA style. She complained that “*not even twenty percent is implemented.*” To gain insights into cultural issues, a further question was asked about classroom management in the training sessions. She clarified, “*This is a problem with government schools. The private ones are different. The curriculum is westernized. In private schools, it’s*

only western culture.” When a teacher educator is vehement in imposing the external cultures, it might be a far cry to expect the teachers to promote local cultures while teaching the language skills.

As stated earlier, the training curriculum from the Maldives could not be obtained; however, the teacher educator from the Maldives elaborated on how the issue of local culture is incorporated into the training:

The main focus is on providing comprehensive coverage of the curriculum. So, if I’m going to talk to you about it, I would say yes, it does focus on the local culture. Some of the lesson designs were discussed in different forums, and what they tried to do in language teacher education classrooms are mostly about how to help our young children learn English and understand the Maldivian context.

She felt that the purpose of training teachers is to prepare them to inculcate cultural values in children and it needs to happen with English teaching as well. In the conversation, she described the teacher education scenario and education in general as having a strong emphasis on local cultures at the expense of other cultures. She put it thus:

Any materials that are used in English teacher training classrooms, you know, readings and all come from within the local culture. We don’t necessarily talk about different races, different colours, different nations. We select the materials and readings and all other things for our students’ ages. They are very much concentrated on aligning the materials with our culture. Now the world is very open but the school or teacher education or other organizations still agree that people should not bring those kinds of materials to your classrooms. That is a cultural thing, the teacher educator should not bring any materials that are against the Islamic faith.

Although the curriculum was not available, her responses indicated that the local culture was the top priority, and it is reflected in the way teacher training is delivered. When asked how to decide on the readings from the BANA countries when being trained, she responded,

Mostly we are open to reading international literature. We have so many materials, even all the reference books, and everything from overseas. So, yes, yeah, we do explain those things, when, when we really bring any kind of example from the local cultures where necessary.

In the case of such readings, teacher educators focus on how to handle them carefully. We can assume that teachers will translate their learning when they teach any materials from outside the country. Her responses showed a balance between local and other cultures but emphasized that the local cultures are to be maintained at any cost. She also gave an example to show how much her country’s education is culturally oriented:

Just take an example of a classroom schedule. When we schedule our classes, we do not necessarily just openly schedule them. We have a specific focus on prayer times. In almost all the higher education institutions, this is something that I have noticed that the prayer time is given a lot of emphasis on in scheduling classes.

Highlighting the fact that Bhutan has a rich culture, the Faculty from Bhutan agreed that culture is evident in the English teacher training curriculum. She observed

that the content may not always contain specific topics related to the local cultures, but in the teacher educators' manners, it is apparent:

We have BA in Social Work; there culture is extensively covered. But in English language, we do it in a subtle manner. And also, by virtue of being Bhutanese, it is very much engrained. So, we subconsciously or consciously showcase that when we teach in the classroom. You wouldn't be able to find specific things in the text related to culture, but through us, our manners, and behaviours, and the way we talk, you can get the taste of our culture in the teacher training college's classroom.

She shared that although the reading materials used in the classroom were from outside the country, the classroom activities reflected the typical Bhutanese culture:

For example, unless we ask our students to get up, they won't do it. When they talk to the tutors or facilitators, they use honorific terms being polite, normally not looking directly in the eyes of the tutors not out of fear but because they grew up with such etiquette. Sub-consciously we resort to all those behaviours.

Bhutan seems to have gone further adopting English as the medium instruction. Therefore, the English language is used in the teaching-learning process with a potential threat to the local culture. The participant confirmed that this language is used only as a medium and not at the expense of the Bhutanese language:

When our students deliver speeches, we make sure they deliver them in our national language. We also have prayers in our national language. We have cultural activities, non-academic activities in our national language. So, I can see a balance there. When it comes to the curriculum, we cannot translate all the subjects into our national language. We do not have the vocabulary and the expertise to do that. But we make it up with the activities we have in the school.

The last interviewee, a teacher educator from Nepal, reported that she not only tried to incorporate the local cultures in the training sessions but also stressed the importance of local cultures in socializing with her students:

I try to incorporate my local culture as much as I can into my teaching process. When delivering English content, I try to contextualize it into our Nepali context as well. Even the simple example of greeting that I mentioned earlier, I try to stress on the Namaste instead of hi and hello.

When asked if she contextualized the topics while discussing them in the training sessions or explained them linking to the original local cultures, she answered that she tried to make a balance:

I didn't mean to say that I should neglect English. English culture is there as it is. However, it's more about enriching the delivery. Elucidating what is given in the text and then adding our own context to it and relating to the text via our own Nepali culture and context.

When asked how she tried to inculcate the cultural sensitivity in the trainees, she reported explicitly telling them about the issue, "*You will have to look at your student's cultural background, the background of the community you are in and other various factors.*" Her response turns out to be more a conscious suggestion than a principle embedded in the training process. Just like other respondents, she delivers a curriculum that does not specifically mention any local culture elements, but she seems to be aware of the issue and tries to bring it to her training sessions.

Discussion

Though BANA culture is taught in the EFL classrooms in the name of target language culture, it does not wholly facilitate the learning of the language. Fish and chips, ballet dance, sun bath, beer fests, and carnivals are not a common sight in South Asia. Likewise, calling a senior person by the first name or arguing against their ideas is not considered appropriate. We can see a similar discomfort expressed by some of the participants in the study by Önalán (2005). There are also issues with the language pedagogy imported from the BANA origin that does not go along well with local social practices, as has been warned by Holliday (1994). For example, pairing boys and girls for pair work activities will not be comfortably taken by the learners. The BANA notion that memorization of the content is wrong for learning goes against the very convention of learning long practised in this region (Yusuf, 2010). There has been a long tradition of memorization as an integral part of learning in this part of the world (Witzel, 2005). Hence, the EFL pedagogy needs to be revisited particularly from the cultural perspectives.

The argument here is not that the BANA elements should not be taught at all. When English comes from these countries, it is natural that it will contain elements of their cultures. Therefore, language learning cannot be complete if BANA cultures fully ignored. The question is how to make language learning meaningful. A useful approach to teaching English meaningfully and with minimum stress would be to integrate the local culture elements with local pedagogical elements. For this purpose, teacher training curricula need to be designed and delivered accordingly. Preparing the trainee teachers to integrate the local and target cultures will contribute to the development of contextually appropriate pedagogies and lead to meaningful learning for the students.

In order to determine how the English teacher training programmes in South Asia integrate the local culture and ways to deal with in the training curriculum and how well training methodology considers local culture, this study was conducted in the eight countries in South Asia. The data analysis above gave an interesting picture. Except in the curriculum of the University of Afghanistan, local culture was found to be missing. Most of the training curricula include the contents and the process of the curricula from the BANA countries, a situation of discomfort expressed by the Turkish teachers (Önalán, 2005). However, all the teacher educators believe that including the local culture in the training curricula will prepare teachers to integrate the local culture in the classroom. The interviews showed that though the local culture elements are not included in the training curriculum, teacher educators tend to integrate them in delivering the training.

The scenario portrayed by the review of content in the training curricula and the teacher educators' perceptions and practices as shared in the interviews indicate that there is a gap in the curriculum and the delivery in terms of the local culture integration. In this study, teacher educators are found to be aware of the importance of local culture in English language teacher education. However, the teacher education curriculum in this South Asian region makes little or no mention of the local culture

and there seems to be an exclusive focus on the BANA culture in the curricula and the training methodology.

Conclusion

Although the study was limited to one respondent from each South Asian country, and only one teacher education institution from each country was covered, a few important insights may be derived from the analysis of the training curricula and interviews with the teacher educators. Firstly, the explicit provision of cultural elements in English teacher training curricula used in South Asian contexts is almost non-existent. The courses particularly dealing with the methods and materials that aim to equip the would-be-teachers with the appropriate knowledge and skills to deal with the local cultures in the EFL classrooms include the BANA-centric pedagogical elements and are silent on the culture issue. They list the standard mainstream methods, concepts and the classroom management techniques. With minor exceptions, the courses are context-free. Secondly, despite the absence of the elements of the local cultures in the curricula, the teacher educators are aware and conscious of the importance of local cultures, and they try to inculcate it in the teacher's skills for incorporating local culture elements when they teach English. However, there is no standard process, each teacher educator has his or her own style of doing it. And it depends upon the country and the education they received as teacher educators. Thirdly, the teacher education programmes are influenced by the local culture not because it is intended in the curriculum but because of the way of lifestyle in the country as mentioned by the participants from Bhutan and the Maldives. However, this does not seem to be the case in all countries. One of the reasons may be the mobility of the people and the adoption of English as a medium of instruction.

From these insights, we can draw some practical implications. The teacher training programmes would produce teachers who are culture sensitive and culture responsive if the curriculum and the delivery of the programmes exposed them to the culturally sensitive training. This way, the blame that English is killing the local cultures may be minimized. To gain more specific insights into the area, further studies involving multiple data sources and a larger sample are suggested.

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Chapter 5

Snowflakes Versus Ice Cubes in Creative Language Use



Shree Deepa and Geetha Durairajan

Abstract This chapter argues that creativity in language is akin to snowflake formation in nature and contrasts it with the freezing of ice cubes in ice trays. It provides a constructive perspective on viewing deviances and errors in language use as possibilities of creative produce with a few examples. A strong evidence-based analysis and interpretation of these chosen samples, sourced from various linguistic and grade levels, and a variety of contexts makes a plausible real-time case to view 'erroneous' produce as a developing snowflake and aims at softening the harsh blows of language policing by teachers, parents and caregivers. It argues that such attempts by the students must be valued, explored and nurtured thoroughly before dismissing them as erroneous or wrong language because if done in a fearful haste of fossilization of errors, they would only unknowingly create 'frozen' boringly scaffolded robotic ice cubes by killing the creative seeds that could have grown into beautifully unique snowflakes.

Keywords Creativity · Language use · Language potentiality · Constructive · Deviances · Error-correction · Scaffolds

Introduction

Ice can be formed in many ways from its liquid state, that is water. For the sake of discussion in this chapter, we need to look at two broad, yet distinctly varied, modalities in the process of ice formation. Ice in nature is often formed as snowflakes and the same ice solidifies as cubes in ice trays. A distinction is made in physics between the solidifying of water as ice cubes in an ice tray and the formation of snowflakes through continuous transformation. In snowflake formation, there is crystallization, melting and recrystallization of water molecules. When solidification proceeds from

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the outside to the inside, as in an ice tray, the boundary remains stable and smooth where the outer walls draw away the heat. By contrast, when a snowflake crystal solidifies outward from an initial seed, as a snowflake does, (where the seed is usually a speck or a grain of dust), grabbing water molecules while it falls through moisture-laden air, the process is unstable, yet it is also uniquely beautiful. More importantly, the speck of dust decides the shape of the snowflake. Since each dust speck has a different shape, each snowflake also carries a distinctive design. They may look similar, but each one has its own structure and is unique. It is interesting to note that each snowflake formed in the same neighbourhood, under the same weather conditions is unique, unduplicable, symmetric, outward-directed, complete, natural, free, delicate and growth-hungry. These snowflakes grow the fastest on their edges, usually in the form of a hexagon. This is in stark contrast to the formation of the ice cubes in an artificial, human-made freezer box that is limited, bound, robotically manufacturable, monotonously similar though symmetric, rock-solid and unimaginative; except in a few cases where the ice trays are fashionably made, in most cases cubes are the preferred shapes. While freezing is common in both the processes, the results, the uniqueness and freedom vary.

Language use, learning/teaching and language production can be compared to the processes mentioned above. On one hand linguists, teachers, evaluators and education industries proclaim that language has an order, correctness (e.g. grammar, spelling, morphology and phonology), rules and conformation requirements, and they aim to teach/test these parameters often through scaffolding, while somehow expecting the learners to end up 'creating' in the same language. Such 'creation' where all the parameters have to be followed, is mere machine-like production. We are taught to produce language in such a language-consuming industry; this is like the production of ice on an industrial scale. In contrast, in the absence of these ice tray systems that bind the learners to freeze into cubes of timetable slot ice trays which are created by the institutionalized freezing processes and modalities, learners and language users would want to crystallize the language that they use into snowflakes. Snowflakes are nature's beautiful creation. Ice cubes cannot be as creative as snowflakes, no matter how imaginatively they are moulded. The trays are moulds that manufacture robotically similar results. One line of thought that must permeate all language users, teachers and learners is how snowflakes in nature came before the cubes from the tray, language came before all grammar books, dictionaries and disciplines. Creativity is natural; conformity is often imposed. Creativity in language use, when exhibited by second or foreign language learners, is often perceived as erroneous due to racial reasons and is expected to be akin to the solidifying of water molecules into ice cubes within a tray, often with scaffolding help. It is assumed that the nature of creativity should be bound by existing rules as stated in grammar books and dictionaries. If the rules of morphophonemic, morphemic, syllabic, word or sentence grammar are not adhered to, such language 'use' is marked as deviant, erroneous and wrong. This judgment regarding deviation can be traced to assumptions about second language learners who are expected to assimilate to target language rules (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1981), learn the target language perfectly and adhere to the norms established by the

'native speakers' of that language. The perfection demanded here is the perfection of a robotically created ice cube which can never become a snowflake.

Creative language use, particularly by multilinguals/bilinguals is akin to the crystallization of a snowflake. It is unique and special (Khubchandani, 1996). All creative language use may not fall into this category. However, when the snowflake type of language use does happen, it needs to be appreciated, valued and used to not just celebrate the creativity but also the resourcefulness of such use. In the attempt to make meaning with multiple language resources and assets (Deepa & Durairajan, 2022), we multilinguals do not make ice cubes but create snowflakes. Normally, such use is either marked as 'deviant' language use or scoffed at as different and 'odd'; only that which falls under the fixed ice cube category is 'accepted'. Contrary to the 'intersect'-ing (Fallatah, 2017) phenomenon of languages outlined in many studies, in this chapter, we expand it to consider the organic growth of creativity as in a snowflake rather than as a mere intersection.

This argument holds true for all languages but it needs to be stated much more powerfully in the context of English as a global language. English has become a language that is like a highly absorbent microfibre cloth; it takes in and makes its own bits and pieces from other languages that it comes in contact with. In spite of this, until the dictionary makers/lexicographers or the grammar book writers/grammarians, who do their work much later and are only recorders of 'language as she is spake' accept such use, it is marked as deviant. The most recent example of this is the use of the word 'ayyo'. Today, because the Oxford English Dictionary has accepted that term, we are told that 'ayyo' is an acceptable English word. Until yesterday, if instead of 'ouch' we had yelled an 'ayyo' in pain, we would have been looked down upon as someone who cannot speak English 'properly' or it would have been written off as a mother tongue influence (MTI) and at worst we would have been language shamed and written off as a language production due to mother tongue interference. If instead of 'ayyo' I (Geetha) had uttered, as I usually do, 'amma' in pain, that use would definitely again be seen as deviant and would not be accepted by the prescriptivists. Linguaging, at a high level (Halliday, 1978) or even grammaring, at a lower level, is still the privilege of the native speaker (Kumaravadivelu, 2006). When the person writing or speaking has the 'power' or has been accepted by society, and perceived as a language user, as let us say, R. K. Narayan, Raja Rao or G. V. Desani, such use gets valued as literariness. What starts off as 'scaffolded' language 'correction' may often lead to the death of the snowflake seed or the melting or dismantling of the delicate structure of the snowflake while the ice cubes are more resistant or slower to melt, just because they are created in the trays of timetable slots. This happens rampantly, virally and often goes unnoticed. The snowflakes die before they become fully frozen ice blossoms. This is because of the current requirements of the language industries that need interactive voice respondents (IVR) more than humane language users (Deepa, 2022a). The IVR, call centre and chatbot industries need more ice cubes and such language users are often anesthetized, lobotomized in language institutions/departments and are memory erased surgically (we are referring to 'scaffolded' language correction here) about their snowflake formation capacities with language use. The seeds of the snowflakes get sown usually in childhood and

in rare cases are allowed to germinate from those language seeds as adults and in anthropogenic contexts (Deepa, 2022b, c, d).

We would now like to pose a few basic questions with reference to creativity and English¹ as a second language use before we present a range of data as evidence for our stance. Who has the power, ability, authority to decide the nature of creative language use? Is it the actual user, the hearer/reader, the teacher, the native speaker or the grammarians/linguists and dictionary compilers/lexicographers? What is creative language use and what are its limits? Will idioms that are from another language, or language use that capture a different culture be perceived as erroneous or creative? What about translation of proverbs from our own languages into English? In order to take these questions toward possible answers, we need to take the analogy of snowflakes, ice cubes and language creativity further. Every snowflake is different because layer by layer it gets added, ring by ring it grows. Are these layers and rings semantic, syntactic or pragmatic? Before attempting to answer these questions, however, it is necessary to examine the type of ‘creativity’ that for us is like the making of ice cubes in a tray.

Frozen Ice Cube Creativity

In Chomskyan linguistics, the oft-quoted sentence that is touted as an example of creative language use is ‘colourless green ideas sleep furiously’ because it is a combination of words never put together earlier. Such examples can be created endlessly with paradigmatic choices. To commit the QWERTY keyboard use to muscle memory, many such combinations have been created: ‘The quick brown fox jumps over a lazy dog’ and ‘Pack my box with five dozen liquor jugs’ are two such examples. These two actually make a lot more sense and are actually a lot more plausible than the ‘creative’ sentence that deals with colourless green ideas!

These are examples of combinations of words that follow selectional restrictions and sub-categorization rules (Chomsky, 1965). At one level, they may have some value, but it is like asking a computer programme to churn out such plausible sentences. In less than a minute, there would be zillions of them and it would take more time to download and save them than it would take the computer to ‘create’ them. None of these examples can be described as snowflake type creativity for two reasons. First of all, there is no real-time context in which such ‘texts’ have been used. Human beings use language in a context, to fulfil a purpose, whether it is a communicative need or as self-expression. Secondly, it is just infinite use of a finite system; the system limits the extent of this so-called creativity, the way the edges of the ice tray determine the shape and size of the ice cube. This is mere generativity. “Piece by piece, word by word, phrase by phrase, structures,... I and thousands of

¹ In this chapter we have used English with a small ‘e’ to refer to the colonial language that the British left behind and used English, (with the capital E) to indicate English in its current version as a global language.

others have made very similar sentences before” (Bleich, 1988, p. 86). These are trivial variations and should not be celebrated.

This type of creativity, however, need not be completely dismissed either because it acknowledges the ability of the human mind to internalize the rules of a human language and come up with all kinds of acceptable combinations of words. But the variations stay within the limit of ‘acceptable’ paradigmatic choices (structural similarity), creatable from a pattern—practice drill. As language educators, we see no relevance of this type of generativity/creativity to education because there are no possibilities of natural growth and beauty in this kind of generative ‘uniqueness’. Uniqueness alone cannot be understood as creative use of language. Along with uniqueness, there must be a natural context, communicative purpose/intent, cultural flavour and so on that generate these snowflake utterances.

We need to contrast these syntagmatic sequences, with text, which “are linked together by something outside of them, such as meaning, topic, context and communicative purpose. Texts are the form in which language is employed in the business of exchanging meaning. A text is more than a string of words” (Prabhu, 2019a, p. 307). Texts are not just sequences of sentences; they are structured entities of language and logic: chunks of knowledge, reasoning, facts and opinion, with open as well as implied meanings, references back and forth and so on (Prabhu, 2019b).

Language is more than a mere set of phonological/morphological, syntactic, semantic, discursual, collocational or registral rules. Language is used in reality to talk about and move across different disciplines. It is the vehicle to convey our thoughts, but is also more than that. Language should not be reduced to a mere communicative or cognitive tool or even one that requires ‘pedagogic scaffolding’ (Deepa, 2022d). Language is a living, organic being and its use must be viewed as transcending skills, abilities, capabilities and proficiencies in order to make it humane and thereby recognize its potentiality (Deepa, 2022a) so that its constructive/neutral/destructive creative use can be perceived as snowflakes with a humane flavour. Language must be essentially perceived as moving beyond proficiency to unfurling its potentiality so that the inherent quality of constructive, neutral or destructive usages (Deepa, 2022a) are consciously captured. This could function differently in pedagogic and anthrologic contexts (Deepa, 2022b, c).

Language is a living phenomenon (just like an ever-growing snowflake); it is organic and natural like a snowflake with fuzzy yet symmetric boundaries. Communication transpires, or happens, and for this, it utilizes language as a tool; language often adjusts itself to new situations. In India, and also in Asia, we use English, but we do not necessarily carry with it or feel bound to use the culture that the language carried when it reached our shores through the British invasion. Today, the English we use has an ‘Indian face’ (Khubchandani, 1997).

In the rest of this chapter, we will be examining data which is English with an Indian face drawn from a range of sources to capture the snowflakiness of its use. Some of this data is observational, while other bits are autobiographical, experiential or drawn from work done by our doctoral students. The names of respondents where used are pseudonyms. Details are given at the appropriate places within and outside parentheses.

Snowflake Language Use at the Phonological/Morphological Level

‘Thaedhu’ was a word used by a child, Durairajan’s nephew, who was 2 years old as a substitute for ‘chair’ in Tamizh. He did not use the Tamizh term ‘*naarkaali*’ but had the English word in mind. In this one word, not one phoneme was the way it ought to have been pronounced according to English pronouncing dictionaries. In spite of this, the caregivers and parents understood what was said, and valued and appreciated such use. This was at the protolanguage stage of language use (Halliday, 1978). From one perspective this child could have been faulted for not being able to speak English at all. That would have meant that we put such language use into an ice cube and decided that this child will never be able to pronounce English phonemes or full words. Instead, the caregivers and parents valued the substitutions and enjoyed the uniqueness of such language use. Similarly, the English word ‘post’ was easily understood by this child, but when articulated, it would come out as ‘pooththu’. But, when we as adults asked him, whether it was ‘pooththu’ the child would say, vehemently, not it is not ‘pooththu’, but with emphasis, ‘**pooththu**’. The word uttered sounded the same to the caregivers, but in the mind of the child, it was different. In his mind, he was uttering ‘postu’ but it came out as ‘poththu’ during his articulation as a child. The inability to articulate the final ‘-st’ cluster could have been perceived by the parent/caregiver as a stammering problem or an articulation problem; instead, it was seen as different and therefore valued as snowflake use.

Similarly, as a young child, when I was in class 1 (this is an autobiographical narrative by Durairajan), I remember running to my elder sister and telling her: “Radha, I saw’d off your class”. For years my family teased me about this use: when I went past, they would mutter in a sing-song tone, “saw’d off your class”. On looking back at that successful ‘speech act performance’ I can recall the triumph, joy and glee I had experienced on that day; I have no recollection, as part of that cameo memory of being reprimanded or chastised by my family members for that ‘performance’. Successful communication took place and that had been valued by my family. The novelty of the utterance had been celebrated by them through teasing, and the so-called deviant utterance had been perceived as funny, not erroneous (Durairajan, 1996).

An applied linguist or teacher educator could argue that the utterance exhibits over generalization and mother tongue interference with language acquisition being fossilized at the level of interlanguage (Selinker, 1972). First, it would have been argued that the past tense marker has been added not only to regular verbs but also to irregular ones. Secondly, the free morpheme ‘off’ has been added to ‘saw’d’ to mean ‘I have somehow managed to’ an emphasis that cannot be easily expressed in English, but is easily stated in the Tamizh word ‘*paathutteenee*’ (*paaththu* meaning have seen and the *ee* capturing the emphasis. Not finding an alternative for the emphasis in English the bilingual mind created an alternative form that does not exist in the English dictionary. This could also be seen in the use of a collocation (saw + off) that does not exist. Similarly, in the case of another seven year old child, Usha Ramesh

(daughter of Shree Deepa) who was learning the names of animals and their young ones at school found that a young one of a cow if named as a calf would mean that the young one of a buffalo must be a ‘balf’ and not a calf again. She vehemently insisted that it is a balf and cannot be a calf. She would say “cow-calf, buffalo-balf” because that was how she preferred to creatively articulate it. Now, even as a 28 year old paediatrician, she still uses the word balf instead of calf to indicate the young one of a buffalo. Since such usage/coinage was permitted by the teacher-mother without a hassle, the child grew up to producing her own poetry, short stories and a novella as a child.

A rigorous ‘frozen ice cube’ teacher would have marked such utterances as wrong: Inside an English classroom, one may have been punished and/or offered pedagogic scaffolding (Deepa, 2022d). If an adult language learner in an anthropogenic context (Deepa, 2022b, c, d) had used it, a conventional hearer would have definitely found fault with them and said: “This person cannot speak English properly”. However, with the enabling encouragement, family members without realizing it, saw those utterances as a snowflake seed allowing such utterances without hassles.

Snowflake Language Use at the Semantic Level

A boy born in the USA to Indian origin parents speaking Hindi at home at the age of 5, had this request to make to his mother.

Please, theek it!”

Explanation: to theek: to mend/repair/restore

Etymology: theek karna (Hindi) (Talageri, personal communication, May 15, 2010)

From a linguists’ perspective, this use and the one that follows could be dismissed as mere ‘code mixing’, as interlanguage use (Selinker, 1972). It is assumed that multi/linguals bilinguals borrow words from their ‘more dominant’ language because the ‘learner’ is never seen as a user with speaking rights (Foucault, 1978) and does not know the appropriate english word ignoring the fact that we need to demystify english in the multilingual classrooms (Deepa & Durairajan, 2022) . If the ‘judgment’ is a little generous it could be stated that the word does not exist in english. However, we multilinguals/bilinguals often switch to another language or mix languages for effect. In this context, we need to recognize that the structure of the English sentence is in accordance with the prescribed rules. This child and the twins in the data below are actually making meaning across languages. In some cases, it could be for effect, but here, it is actually cross or translanguaging. This is just comfort use, where the word has been correctly used, and the syntax of the English sentence is perfect. If large numbers of children use it, eventually, like how ‘ayyo’ has entered the dictionary, going by how English borrows and makes other language words its own, ‘*theek*’ as a better word for repair, mend or correct, may just enter English. In this sense, this is snowflake use at the level of semantics. The same explanation holds true for the word ‘*dantable*’ in the extract given below. This was told by the same boy to

his twin brother. If the boy had to state it in English he would have had to state: “a scoldable act” which is a complex use of language for a 5-year-old. At the level of ideation, the child is fully capable; it is only Language which was probably a barrier. He therefore comfortably replaced the English phrase with ‘*dantable*’. From a prescriptive viewpoint, this could be dismissed as erroneous. However, we need to remember that this is how dialects and idiolects are born, and then when there is a largish community of practice, these words may lay the foundation for a new dialect and in some cases, even a language. We need to develop and encourage what our children do with language in order to foster language snowflake production.

A Tamilian child, the same child who uttered the words ‘*thaethu*’ and ‘*poththu*’ a few years later, along with his friends chuckled and joked to state: “*Akka’s mutti is joining our school*” (*akka* here refers to elder sister in Tamizh; in that particular school that the child went to teachers are referred to as ‘*akka*’). The reference was to their teacher’s niece, who was to join the school. These children, with joyful abandon, took the word ‘niece’ substituted the homonym ‘knees’ and then translated the word into Tamizh (the Tamizh word for knees is ‘*mutti*’ and had fun with language). This is cross-language snowflake creation which should be encouraged. If such seeds are nurtured and cared for, they will blossom into amazing snowflaky literature.

The examples discussed above are with reference to children who are comfortable with both their languages, Hindi and English in one case, and Tamizh and English in the other. But, such forays into snowflake language are not necessarily exhibited only by such children. In their attempt to make meaning, language learners who may have problems with the structure of the second language, (in this case English) also exhibit such creativity. It is we teachers who stun such creativity and silence such children. A college-level student, who did all her schooling in Malayalam, and was a little shaky with her English, was asked to reflect on her experience of comparing her own speech performances, in Malayalam and English, where as part of a doctoral study, Malayalam the more enabled language was used as a resource to teach English at the tertiary level. In her self-reflection on the experience, she was able to state that she was really able to think differently, after understanding that it could make her speech not just interesting but also ‘point rich’ (Karthika, 2017).

What that student meant was that in her speech, she had many valid points to make; not being able to state it in that manner, she took the idea from her more enabled language Malayalam, but did not do a literal translation; instead, she created a new term in English, ‘point -rich’. Such a term does not exist in English, but a similar expression such as data-rich exists. It is very easy for a teacher to ‘condemn’ such use and criticize the student. However, it is also possible to recall that we do talk about someone as rich in something but poor in something else and value the attempt to use a hyphenated word to make meaning in a creative manner. This is going beyond mere language production. As teachers and educators, we need to remember that there was a time when the use of the word ‘prepone’ was looked down upon and seen as ‘wrong’ till it got added to dictionaries. This was coined and used by just taking a prefix that exists and applying it to a half word, ‘-pone’ to create a new word. The rationale was that if ‘post’pone is used then a pre- state is assumed,

leading to the word prepone. When there are pre and posttests, why not prepone and postpone? ‘Point-rich’ must be viewed through that same lens. In a doctoral study that dealt with critical thinking, when asked to comment on the use of language in TV advertisements referred to the person in the advertisement and said:

...comedian named Rishi who’s having a problem of ‘bluffering’ ... (Deepesh, 2016, p. 243).

The word ‘bluffering’ does not exist in the English language; yet, it is probably a combination of bluffing and blabbering. It has been ‘created’ by the student to indicate what he wanted to say, primarily because he realized that existing words do not capture his thoughts. In linguistic parlance, this is what is known as a semantic gap. We are not sure whether this student would have taken the risk of using a ‘new’ word in a high-stakes examination speaking test; even if he had, there is a high likelihood that it would have not been valued. Instead such a snowflake language use would have actually earned this student a lower grade in vocabulary use for the examiner is likely to have concluded that this child did not know the word bluffing and was using it wrongly. When ‘fantabulous’ is accepted as a word in English, why shouldn’t this be accepted? The teacher in the classroom, who is assessing for learning should not be bound by these prescriptive assumptions. The teacher can evaluate with care and tolerance and try to find out why the student used such a word. She will probably get good insights into the mind of the student and be able to value such languaging. The teachers can activate the language potentiality (Deepa, 2022a) and draw on the constructive potential in their language use to nurture such snowflake creativity, rather than kill the seed of the snowflake using just the capability/proficiency lens of brutally scaffolded correction (Deepa, 2022d).

Snowflake Language Use at the Syntactic Level

Another Malayalam medium student, who participated in the same doctoral research study, that dealt with using the more enabled language Malayalam, as a resource to teach English, was asked to talk about a skill she had learnt recently. She spoke about learning to drive and said that according to her, all women should not only know driving, but also know how to “drive them home alone” to mean drive back alone (Karthika, 2017). When evaluated from a grammar-book perspective, this would be marked as a syntactic error where the suffix ‘selves’ (drive themselves home, alone) is not added to them. The judgment based on this tiny sample could stretch to an examiner stating: “this student does not know her reflexives; she needs remedial teaching” that is opting to exploit the destructive potential of language (Deepa, 2022a) thereby leaving a very ‘positively noxious’ reason to be terrified of using English (Deepa & Durairajan, 2022). If this had been spoken in a high-stakes examination, the student would have been marked low on grammar. But it is important to understand where this phrase is coming from and value the workings of the mind of this student. ‘Driving them home alone at night’ is an acceptable expression similarly, ‘all women should know to drive home alone’ is more acceptable, and this student

has made an analogous expression from experiences similar to these acceptable ones and has made further connections. Going home alone, particularly at night, is a risky attempt for any woman. Driving home alone is a better proposition than having to look for public transport. Driving someone home is a perfectly acceptable expression. 'Home Alone' is, as we know, the name of a very popular English movie. This user of English has taken all these ideas and expressions, (what was available and accessible) and created an expression that says it all quite effectively.

Snowflake Language Use at the Cultural Level

English today has become a global language and is no longer the property of the people who inhabit that tiny island where it first originated. One outcome of this is that we English language users worldwide, who speak global Englishes, need not be bound anymore by the 'target culture' of British English and should go far beyond just being comfortable using our own idioms and proverbs; we must celebrate such use (Deepa & Durairajan, 2022). We need to do this to own the language and ought to fight tooth and nail to not freeze into ice cubes in a mould.

As students of English we grew up learning the expression 'I want to have my cake and eat it too'. But in our culture, we do not eat cake so regularly; as such, many of us state: "I want my idly and eat it too". Similarly, I do not earn my daily bread for I don't eat it on a daily basis. I earn for my idly chutney, or my biriyani or my roti curry! More importantly we ought to have huge issues when we use expressions like 'a warm welcome' or 'house warming ceremony' because India is a tropical country that is already warm or rather hot (temperature-wise) most months in a year and adding more 'warmth' would actually mean adding more discomfort; this is in stark contrast with a country that hardly sees a good sunlit day. We come from a geographic culture where coolness is considered comfortable and welcomed. We put food in our plates, and not on our tables, because most Indians do not eat at a dining table! Many sit on the floor; some others sit on a sofa and hold their plate in their hands. Very recently, we authors have started using two new expressions; we have decided that we need not state 'roger that' to say, have you read and accepted. Instead, we have decided to ask each other: 'Ramar that?' because Roger is an arbitrary name that is alienating, but Ramar is closer to our hearts. There are many such examples in the life of a multilingual and confining these natural snowflaky creativity of a multilingual into a robotic ice cube is unwarranted. Language is a product of both culture and geography: when used to capture emotional expressions in a pluricultural context must be allowed to blossom into a snowflake rather freezing them into ice cubes.

Although the British left the freezing or frozen language with us, we unfettered and thawed ourselves from imperialistic shackles and grew our own snowflakes using the chilly atmosphere that got created by the cold language (pun intended!) called English, we must free ourselves from carrying a c-mindset (Deepa & Durairajan, 2022). So for us, it was English as the British left us and we turned that into our own English. Paneer pizza got into the Dominoes Pizza menu; the curry masala mix

got into noodles and; the McAloo tikki burger is a favourite world over. Similarly, english has become English as a global language after it imbibed words, expressions and cultures from various countries and more so from Indianness with additions of words like preponed, xeroxed, pariah, masala chai, etc. With the ice tray of what they proudly called english that the teeny tiny invasive country that they left behind in all their victim countries/soil that they violently mis-ruled, many snowflakes will naturally blossom, provided the institutions let the users of the snowflakes grow and multiply peacefully.

Conclusion

In this chapter, using data from various sources, we have attempted to look at actual language use and point out that from a different perspective, what looks like an error can be valued and celebrated as creativity. This ought to be done in the classroom by teachers; only then will the fear of using language erroneously slowly disappear (Deepa & Durairajan, 2022) and students will begin to use language creatively. Expressions and words earlier perceived as erroneous must be checked and constructive attempts made to find the seed of the snowflake in them; this is the job of the caregiver, parent or teacher to enable and motivate the language user to develop the seed of the snowflake. We advocate ‘pushing’ the cognitive limits and abilities of learners and students to go beyond what they can do with language but such pushing can lead to falling. ‘Pushing’ usually collocates with ‘away’: we need to change this perspective and pull the student gently to grow into a full-fledged snowflake in language creation, one molecule at a time to facilitate the uniqueness of creative expressions. If we think of creative language use as akin to the creation of a snowflake, unique, and as a miracle, then, we need to celebrate the language use of every learner who is also a user (Deepa & Durairajan, 2022). This does not mean that we must accept every expression uttered by a student as creative, nor should we engage in language policing. With exposure, with practice, and careful, sensitive, sensible, convivial (Durairajan, 2003) facilitation by the teacher, a certain system will be internalized in the mind of the student. The focus is on meaning-making and not the learning of forms, resulting in the seed of a snowflake that is germinating. The means are always available, in the sense that the deeper system is actually infinite and any language will stretch to accommodate either new wordings, or give new meanings to old words, or form new nominalizations, verbalizations, etc. These attempts to make sensible and creative meaning, are not deviations from the norm but forays into snowflake creation.

In the domain of error correction, it is assumed that if not corrected the errors will be fossilized and frozen; this is like saying ice in a cube cannot be melted and refrozen into a different shape. To take the analogy further, the argument that could be made is that once frozen into an ice cube such molecules cannot ever be used to create a snowflake. The end purpose of building a snowflake is to allow the learner/student

to be a natural, organic, language user for creative purposes as well as to enable and enhance literariness in everyday communication.

Such potential and potentiality of language use needs to be handled sensibly and sensitively by parents, caregivers and teachers. We need to spend time and energy to ask the children/students/learners for a rationale for the deviant expressions used; if they are able to articulate their reasons, then such use must be considered as snowflakes. It is only in the absence of the rationale by the deviant producer, may they be discarded as just melted ice in ice trays. Even then it does not mean that these molecules are completely useless and discardable. They must be perceived as precursors of a possible snowflake formation. Ice cubes are best left in juice glasses and snowflakes are nature's creative, unique and beautiful contributions akin to creativity in language use.

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Part II
Curriculum and Materials

Chapter 6

Economisation of the Secondary English Curriculum in Bangladesh



Md. Maksud Ali and M. Obaidul Hamid

Abstract Economisation or the alignment between education policy/practices and employment has emerged as a dominant trend in education in the globalised world. This employment orientation in education has come to shape English language teaching (ELT) policies and curricula in developing societies, emphasising the need for preparing students as skilled human resources so they can participate in the economy and contribute to national development. Taking Bangladesh as a case, this chapter unpacks the forces and identifies key discourses which have contributed to the economisation of the Bangladesh secondary English curriculum. In doing so, we utilise the country's public policy, education policy and the secondary curriculum documents as our data sources. The documents are analysed utilising a critical discourse analysis framework. Our analysis of the policy texts/documents indicates that economisation of the secondary English curriculum is embedded in the broader political economic context of the country, which has been shaped by two key forces, namely globalisation and neoliberalism. The chapter contributes to our understanding of the discursive practices around economisation of ELT and English curricula in developing societies.

Keywords Economisation · Human capital · English language · Curriculum · Secondary education in Bangladesh

Introduction

Globalisation has had a significant impact on education in developed as well as developing societies. One important way in which this impact has materialised is

The original version of this chapter has been revised by eliminating the typeset error in the Abstract. The correction to this chapter can be found at https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-6458-9_31

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R. Khan et al. (eds.), *Local Research and Glocal Perspectives in English Language Teaching*, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-6458-9_6

through the alignment of the curriculum with the job-market demand. In responding to globalisation, for example, education policymakers have reformed their English language education to develop competent citizens who can access employment and other economic opportunities in local and global markets (see Ali & Hamid, 2021). Such reforms have been guided by the discourses of the capital value of English on the one hand and market logic as well as the discourses of global competition and national competitiveness on the other (Brooker, 2018; Euromonitor International, 2010; Sayer, 2015). This trend has had its manifestation in the Bangladeshi education system. Considering the economic opportunities and challenges brought by globalisation, the Bangladesh Government has reformed English language teaching (ELT) policies since the last decade of the past century by emphasising the need for human capital development. The job-orientation of the curriculum or its economisation has also been prescribed, directly or indirectly, by global policy actors including international agencies and development partners, weakening the nation-state authority over education policy matters (see Ali & Hamid, 2021; Coleman, 2017; Erling, 2017; Hamid & Rahman, 2019). This chapter aims at unpacking how starting from the 1990s, Bangladeshi education authorities have introduced a new trend in the country's English language education by aligning curriculum with the employment market. We are particularly interested in understanding the discourses which have promoted this employment orientation of the curriculum. The chapter utilises data from public policies, education policy and secondary English curricula, which are analysed employing critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 2001). The chapter contributes to our understanding of the changing nature of English language curricula in developing societies in a globalised world.

The chapter is organised as follows: We start the next section by defining economisation, which provides the theoretical background for our analysis of the data. In explicating economisation, we shed light on human capital which is in demand in the market economy. We also highlight the human capital theory (HCT) and its assumptions, which foreground market-relevant skills as key to individual economic productivity and national economic growth. Next, data and analytical procedures employed in this study are discussed. The section that follows presents the findings, highlighting the discourses and the forces which provide the rationale for economisation of the secondary English curriculum in Bangladesh. We conclude the chapter by highlighting the larger narrative, which emerged from the discourses identified in the study.

Economisation of Education

Economisation of education refers to the market orientation of education policy and curricula (Spring, 2015). This is achieved by creating an alignment between educational provision and the skills which are in demand in the market. These market-relevant skills are called 'human capital' (Blair, 2011). The notion of human capital can be traced back to the eighteenth century. Adam Smith was the first economist

who argued about individuals' capacity and skills for employability and social development, albeit he did not use the term 'human capital' (Spring, 2015). The idea was further developed by Arthur Pigou in 1928, who coined the term 'human capital' (Burton-Jones & Spender, 2011). The notion of human capital received much attention in the subsequent decades. Economists such as Theodore Schultz and Gary Becker "proclaimed it as much a form of capital as physical and financial capital, and emphasised its importance to future economic growth" (Burton-Jones & Spender, 2011, p. 2). Since the 1940s, economists have foregrounded empirical studies estimating the return value of investment in education. Such analyses of investment and return from education led to the emergence of a discipline called 'economics of education' (see Brewer, Hentschke, & Eide, 2010). Studies within economics of education provide the basis for educational economists to argue that investment in training people in market-relevant skills yields the best economic return. The idea became dominant in the United States (US) during the 1970s which also marked the beginning of the neoliberal regime. The rise of a capitalist society and the new skill demand in workplaces gave economists renewed impetus to highlight the mismatch between schooling and employment. This led to the recognition of the value of investment in market-oriented skills and the alignment of schooling with the emerging market (see Bowles & Gintis, 1976). In other words, education policy and school curricula started to be re-oriented in relation to market logics and demand. This process of the alignment between schooling and market was underpinned by the assumptions of HCT, which state that: (a) investment in schooling for human capital development increases individuals' productivity, employability and income; and (b) individuals' employability and income contribute to poverty alleviation, social development and national economic growth (see Harber, 2014; OECD, 2013).

The economisation of education trend has extended to different parts of the world under globalisation (see Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). The spread is often attributed to the key forces of *globalisation* and *neoliberalism*. While globalisation refers to the integration of global economy, neoliberalism has underpinned the integration (Olssen, Codd & O'Neill, 2004). Neoliberalism is a capitalist ideology which promotes market logics in all spheres of society, including education (Block, 2017). In other words, globalisation has paved the way for neoliberalism to extend market logics to different corners of the earth—a process which is sometimes termed *neoliberal globalisation* (Hamid & Rahman, 2019; Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). In the context of neoliberal globalisation, developing nations around the world have made a swing towards economisation of education policy and curricula. This shift towards the market orientation of curricula has significantly influenced language education in these nations. (Brooker, 2018; Wedell, 2011). The movement towards economisation of English language education in these societies as a response to the market has led to the emergence of an instrumentalist policy trend called *English for human capital development* (see Ali & Hamid, 2021). This policy trend prioritises development of learners' communication skills which are construed relevant to the employment market. The key assumptions which guide the policy trend are: (a) English language skills are a form of human capital, which can increase individuals' productivity, employability and

income due to the relevance of these skills to market economy; and (b) individuals' proficiency in English is critical for their upward career mobility and social development (see Ali & Hamid, 2021 for details). These assumptions are undergirded by HCT, which foregrounds individuals and their market-relevant skills as key to economic growth and social development (see also Block, 2008; Erling, 2017; Sayer, 2019). The capital value of the English language underlying these assumptions can be theorised as *linguistic capital* (Bourdieu, 1991). According to Bourdieu, linguistic capital is a form of cultural capital which is exchangeable into economic capital. The linguistic capital theory has been utilised by applied linguistics scholars to explore how English is exchanged as a commodity in the employment market (see Cameron, 2012; Heller, 2010; Park, 2011). Park's (2011) study provides important insights into the linguistic capital of English in South Korean employment market, illustrating individuals' struggles for learning English to have a competitive edge in the market.

Economisation is a global policy trend which is promoted through local–global collaboration in response to neoliberal market logics/interest (Spring, 2015). Thus, as a global policy trend taking its shape in multiple local contexts, economisation needs to be understood taking into consideration the global-national imbrications (Adhikary & Lingard, 2019). While nation-states target policy investment in human capital development, the process is often facilitated by global agencies, including the World Bank (WB), Asian Development Bank (ADB) and Department for International development (DFID) of the British government (see Hamid & Jahan, 2021; Melitz, 2016; Rizvi & Lingard, 2010).

Data and Analytical Framework

In this chapter, we examine how economisation has played out at the macro policy in Bangladesh, and how the broader policy emphasis on human capital has influenced the country's secondary education English curriculum. Our aim is to understand the key discourses, which provide the basis for economisation of the secondary English curriculum in Bangladesh and other developing societies. We utilise the following documents as our data sources: public policy (Planning Commission, 2011, 2015), national education policy (Ministry of Education, 2010) and secondary English curricula (NCTB, 1995, 2012). These documents were collected for a larger study on English and human capital development in Bangladesh, which was approved by the Ethics Committee of the University of Queensland in Australia.

We utilise Fairclough's (2001) critical discourse analysis (CDA) to analyse the data. In this study, we understand discourse as the construction of truth/reality through the use of language and other semiotic resources (Fairclough, 2001; Hamid & Jahan, 2021). From a CDA perspective, discourses are non-neutral and loaded with ideology and politics (Fairclough, 2001). As Hamid and Luo (2016, p. 289) argue, "the discursive view of language considers language as a non-neutral semiotic device which is

exploited by those with social, political and discursive power for their own material and ideological interests”. Therefore, our analysis of the texts is guided by this understanding of language use as ideologically motivated. More specifically, we try to understand the construction of economisation in relation to the broader economic and political context. Thus, rather than seeing language as a mere technical tool for communication, we consider language use as social practice and embedded in the broader social, economic and political context. Being informed by these assumptions, we employ Fairclough’s framework to unpack the discursive practices as well as the forces, which have led to the economisation of the Bangladesh secondary English curriculum. The framework consists of three key stages, including description (i.e. textual analysis), interpretation (i.e. discursive practices) and explanation (social practices). At the description stage, we examine the lexical items in the policy texts to understand the embedded ideologies which might have guided text production. Then, at the next stage, we examine how human capital has been represented at the policy level in relation to education and development. This helped us to identify the key discourses, which encouraged economisation of education in Bangladesh. Finally, at the explanation stage, we try to understand the broader social and political contexts in which the policy texts/discourses were generated.

Findings: Discourses of Neoliberalism, Human Capital and Economisation

Our analysis of the documents revealed the influence of the discourse of economisation in shaping education policy and the secondary English curriculum in Bangladesh. However, understanding economisation required us to examine the broader context in which the phenomenon took its shape. As the analysis indicated, the economisation discourse is embedded in the discourses of neoliberalism and human capital. Neoliberal market logics have created a demand for human capital for Bangladesh to have a competitive edge in the global economy. In other words, human capital development in ELT (i.e. economisation of English curriculum) is a response to the broader political-economic context. The key discourses identified in this study are elaborated below.

Discourse of Neoliberalism

In relation to the economic development of Bangladesh, the public policy field has constructed a particular discourse of neoliberalism. The lexical items such as ‘liberalisation’, ‘market’, ‘competitive’ and ‘competition’, illustrate how neoliberal ideology has been accommodated into the public policy field. As the following extract indicates:

With the onset of globalisation the international environment is becoming more competitive and demanding. Greater globalisation, combined with more liberalisation of markets and products, means greater global competition. (Planning Commission, 2011, p. 244)

The extract indicates how neoliberal globalisation has impacted developing nations such as Bangladesh to reformulate their public policies to have an edge in the globalised world. While globalisation has integrated nations, such integration is not neutral— i.e. the integration requires ‘liberalisation of market’, which eventually downsizes nation-states’ authority and control over the internal market (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). Thus, underlying the globalising process, there is an agenda for promoting the open market economy, all in an effort to strengthen the global economy (see Block, 2017). In a globalised world, national economic growth and development are relational, particularly in relation to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These globally agreed development goals provide the framework for countries to perform locally in relation to a global vision. The performance is then evaluated based on the indicators and criteria set within the SDGs. In other words, globalisation has also promoted competition between nations in the first place. As globalisation is a process of extension of the global market economy, the phrase ‘international environment’ inevitably represents the global market, a space which is contested as revealed by the words, ‘competitive’ and ‘demanding’. In other words, integration with the globalised world requires the ability to compete with others, and the ability to respond to the international ‘demand’. In relation to the changing nature of the employment sector in a neoliberal environment, the Bangladesh Government has emphasised the role of its citizens’ competitiveness in relation to the development of the country. Thus, while Bangladesh has recognised the importance of globalising its economy in relation to its vision for economic development, the country’s public policy field has made it clear that such integration requires the ability of its citizens to participate in the formal economy and compete with others in the globalised employment system.

Discourse of Human Capital

At the same time, staying competitive in a globalised world and having access to the contemporary job market requires human capital. This is the reason why the public policy field has emphasised that “human resources development is at the core of Bangladesh’s development efforts and access to quality education is crucial for poverty alleviation and economic development” (Planning Commission, 2011, p. 296). The importance of human capital in the development of the country has been succinctly explicated by the Planning Commission of the Bangladesh Government:

Efforts to reduce the poverty level generally focus on driving growth and development so that the poor can graduate out of poverty. In order to do so, improvement in human capital is required. There is ample evidence of a strong relationship between investments in human capital and poverty alleviation. With improved human capital, suited to the demands of the

labour market, the poor and marginalised population can seize employment opportunities for income generation and sustenance. (Planning Commission, 2015, p. 580)

As the extract indicates, human capital is associated with Bangladesh's efforts to alleviate poverty and accelerate social development. Human capital is also represented as a tool for poor people to 'seize employment opportunities' and increase their income. The emphasis on the 'relationship between investments in human capital and poverty alleviation' reveals how Bangladeshi policymakers' dispositions have been shaped by economic returns of education, as discussed above (Brewer et al., 2010). In other words, the policy has been informed by the cost–benefit analysis, which has been foregrounded by the educational economists drawing from HCT. This analysis is based on the market logic, which is also explicit in the above extract—'suited to the demands of the labour market'.

Our analysis, therefore, suggests that the emphasis on human capital is guided by neoliberal ideology, which foregrounds market logics in a globalised world. Emphasising what is valued in the market (in this case, human capital) in relation to employment, income and national economic growth is guided by neoliberalism (Spring, 2015).

Discourse of Economisation

Education has been constructed as a tool for human capital development in relation to individual career mobility and national economic growth. Our analysis indicates that discourses of education have been constructed by aligning its purpose with the skill demand in the employment market. The way education is defined in public policy is noteworthy, as the definition is embedded in the notion of economisation. For example:

Education, in its broadest sense, is the most crucial input for empowering people with skills and knowledge and for providing them access to productive employment in future. Improvements in education are not only expected to enhance efficiency but also to augment the overall quality of life. Education acts as an engine of growth for economic and social development of a nation. (Planning Commission, 2011, p. 296)

As the extract indicates, individuals' empowerment is construed to be dependent on their access to employment. From this perspective, education is defined as a tool for developing individuals' knowledge and skills (i.e. human capital), which may increase their employability. Economisation of education in the public policy space is manifest through such words as 'employment', 'productive' and 'efficiency'. These lexical items indicate how the notion of education is underpinned by the market logics, and how individuals' access to jobs is dependent on skills which are construed relevant to the market. Such a disposition at the macro policy level is shaped by the discourse of neoliberalism as discussed above. In the extract, the metaphor of 'an engine' is also significant to unpack how the role of education has been foregrounded in the public policy space. The word 'engine' denotes Bangladesh's

gradual transformation into an industry and service sector-based economy in the context of neoliberal globalisation from the earlier agriculture-based economy. In this context of social and economic transformation, the country needs to respond to the demand of the market by developing individuals' knowledge and skills so that Bangladeshi citizens can participate in the changing employment market. Their participation in the employment sector and their income are linked to the macro-level development of the country. This is further explicated in the following extract:

Improvement in human capital increases the potential of workers through enhanced knowledge and skills, which lead to economic growth and development. Education is the means through which human capital is improved. (Planning Commission, 2015, p. 581)

Economisation of education has, therefore, been represented as critical for Bangladesh's 'economic growth and development'. The words, 'improvement', 'increases', 'enhanced', 'growth' and 'development' all indicate policymakers' positive attitudes towards investment in human capital. Thus, economics of education and HCT provide the basis for investment in skill-based education, in relation to national economic transformation. The emphasis on economisation is also clear in the choice of the word, 'workers'. The word is associated with the world of work, where employees' skills are a form of capital. The extract also indicates how economisation has impacted other goals of education within the public policy space. Education has been represented as a tool for economic development, but other social and moral goals are not prioritised equally. Thus, a narrowed understanding of development, based on HCT and the neoliberal market logics, has guided the construction of the discourse of education, in relation to national development.

The discourse of economisation of education at the broader policy level has also influenced national education policy. The country's education policy has reproduced the discourse, as can be seen from one of the key goals, which is:

to develop a learner with competencies so that s/he can compete in the job market, especially in the economic sector of the country. (Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 3)

The extract reveals how economisation manifests in the national education policy. Within the policy, the focus on 'competencies' exposes the policy's convergence with the human capital development agenda emphasised in the public policy. At the same time, the phrase, 'job market' indicates the employment orientation. The argument for developing learners' 'competencies' for a competitive edge in employment also reveals how economisation emphasised in the education policy is influenced by the discourse of neoliberalism. Thus, in a way, the education policy emphasises development of learners' dispositions which make them suitable for the contemporary employment market.

In a direct response to such an agenda emphasised in the education policy, the secondary English curriculum has also constructed the discourse of economisation. Proficiency in English is represented as an employment-oriented skill in the curriculum, which is needed to address the development initiative of individuals and the Bangladesh Government. For example:

English needs to be recognised as an essential work-oriented skill that is needed if the employment, development and educational needs of the country are to be met successfully. Increased communicative competence in English, therefore, constitutes a vital skill for learners at this stage.... (NCTB, 1995, p. 136)

In other words, English is represented as capital (Bourdieu, 1991), which is needed in the employment sector (Euromonitor International, 2010). This idea of proficiency in English as capital resonates with the idea of commodification of language in a neoliberal environment (Cameron, 2012; Heller, 2010). Like other marketable commodities, languages can also be exchanged in the market (Bourdieu, 1991). Languages such as English with more prestige and ties with the global economy are valued due to their relevance to the market (Euromonitor International, 2010). Developing proficiency in the market-relevant languages, therefore, means possessing an economically transformable capital which may contribute to the social position of individuals (Bourdieu, 1977). By the same token, not knowing the market-relevant languages is also explained as a barrier to individual development and national economic growth (Brooker, 2018; Lee, 2012). These instrumentalist discourses of English, to a large extent, contribute to the economisation of English curricula in a globalised world (Price, 2014; Sayer, 2015; Seargeant & Erling, 2011; Suarez, 2005).

The discourse of economisation within the Bangladesh secondary English curriculum was initially introduced during the 1990s. In response to the changing political-economic landscape of Bangladesh in the context of globalisation, the English curriculum was revised in 1995. In the reformed curriculum, English was recognised as a ‘work-oriented skill’, which could be invested in the job market (Chakraborty & Bakshi, 2016). The recognition of English as a ‘vital skill’ for accessing employment marked a shift in the curricular policy for secondary English. The earlier concentration on grammar and English literature was replaced by an emphasis on communication skills development so that learners could be transformed into human resources as a direct response to neoliberal market logics (Ali & Hamid, 2021; Hamid & Baldauf, 2008). The secondary English curriculum was further revised in 2012. While the 1995 curriculum mainly addressed the local employment and development needs of Bangladesh, the 2012 curriculum took a broader outlook by emphasising Bangladeshi citizens’ participation in both local and global employment. In line with the new foci, the latest curriculum has further characterised ELT as a means of human capital formation. The discourse of economisation in the new curriculum is unambiguous, as can be noted in the following extract:

Therefore, the curriculum focuses on teaching-learning English as a skill-based subject so that learners can use English in their real-life situations by acquiring necessary knowledge and skills, learning about cultures and values, developing positive attitudes, pursuing higher education and finding jobs, nationally and globally. (NCTB, 2012, p. 73)

The curriculum’s consideration of English ‘as a skill-based subject’ is an example of economisation of ELT within secondary education. The discourse of economisation is also clear in the choice of lexis such as ‘knowledge and skills’, ‘attitudes’ and ‘jobs’ (OECD, 2001). In relation to the emphasis on human capital development,

the secondary English curriculum has adopted the ideology of teaching English as skills. Thus, instead of focusing on discrete grammar items and literary pieces, the curriculum conceptualised teaching of English as training students in communication skills, which consist of reading, writing, listening and speaking abilities (Ali, 2010; Rahman & Pandian, 2018; Rahman et al., 2019). Block (2008) argues that dividing the language into the four measurable skills is the first stage of the commodification of language, which has contributed to the emergence of a billion-dollar global ELT industry of textbooks and testing services. Such commodification of English (through skillisation of the language) is clearly a response to the neoliberal market logics. Developing countries need to respond to this skillisation of language education due to the rising global pressure as well as the national imperative to prepare their citizens for the emerging neoliberal workplaces (Ali & Hamid, 2021).

It is important to understand how discourses of economisation have been inserted into the English curriculum. Globalisation has not only integrated countries and the global economy, but also spread discourses and educational models which are relevant to the neoliberal market economy (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). In the context of neoliberal globalisation, the human capital framing of education (i.e. economisation) has been globalised across developing societies by the major policy organisations, including the WB, ADB and DFID (now superseded by Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office), as mentioned before. These organisations work with developing countries to economise the curricula so that human capital is improved in those contexts. In Bangladesh, these organisations have played a key role in restructuring secondary education to make it relevant to the employment market (Asian Development Bank, 2015). Particularly, in relation to the economisation of the English curriculum, DFID played a critical role. During the 1990s, a project called English language teaching improvement project (ELTIP) was funded by the Bangladesh government and the DFID, which brought about a significant change in the secondary English curriculum by leading a shift from earlier grammar-translation-based language teaching to skilled-based ELT. Consequently, the 1995 curriculum, for the first time, introduced the concept of four skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking within the secondary level ELT field. The way Bangladesh and the DFID worked together has some purchase to understanding the start of global influence on the country's ELT policy domain. In the globalisation context, Bangladesh was not the only policy player in relation to ELT within secondary education. Instead, the authority of the nation-state started to be contested by the global agencies, which brought policy expertise and pedagogical models (see Ali & Hamid, 2021). In other words, curricular innovation for aligning language education with the employment market resulted in the dependency of the country on development aid and external expertise (Ali & Walker, 2014; Hamid, 2010). The global influence on the Bangladeshi ELT increased over the years, and the authority of the nation-state decreased due to massive deregulation during the first decade of the twenty-first century (Ali & Hamid, 2021). An example of such increasing influence is another project called English in Action (EIA) which was funded by the UKaid through DFID. This £50 million project was not awarded to the Bangladesh government, but it was privatised by assigning third parties for its implementation. This increase in

the power of donors may be attributed to globalisation and the promotion of neoliberal ideology such as market logics and state deregulation (see Hamid & Rahman, 2019). EIA promoted economisation within Bangladeshi ELT explicitly by making its market-relevant goal clear, which was to “help 25 million Bangladeshis improve their English as a route into work and out of poverty” (EIA, n.d.). Therefore, the project was funded to make people employable by teaching them English. This is the major goal, which guided the project. EIA represented English as a panacea for poverty. In doing so, the project was linked with the SDGs. Discourses of economisation such as English for employment, poverty alleviation and development introduced by EIA influenced the secondary English curriculum as it was revised in 2012 jointly by the Ministry of Education, Bangladesh and ADB. Hence, economisation took place through a national-global consortium in the context of globalisation (Adhikary & Lingard, 2019).

Conclusion

This chapter has illustrated how discourses of neoliberalism and human capital have guided the Bangladesh national education policy and the secondary English curriculum to subscribe to the discourses of economisation. The three discourses which were identified and discussed above provide a larger narrative that reads as follows: Bangladesh’s integration with the globalised world and its plan for economic growth required promotion of neoliberal market ideologies. In this neoliberal environment, human capital is a key requirement for its citizens to stay competitive in the job market. As proficiency in English is a form of human capital which provides the skills needed to integrate with others globally and facilitates access to employment in a neoliberal world, Bangladesh secondary English curriculum has been economised, emphasising the job-relevant skills which will increase individuals’ productivity and employability and contribute to individual and national development in a globalised world.

Bangladesh’s development has been represented as relational—the country’s survival in a competitive world depends on its investment in human resource development. Thus, investment in ‘skill-based’ education is construed as key to the country’s progress and economic development. As previously indicated, this idea of education as an investment in human capital for economic growth is guided by economics of education and HCT, which have shaped education policy and school curricula around the world (Harber, 2014; Rizvi & Lingard, 2010; Spring, 2015). With regards to the English curricula in developing societies, economisation manifests in two ways: (a) through the discourses of English language as capital, commodity and a ‘work-oriented’ skill (Ali & Hamid, 2021; Price, 2014); and (b) through the emphasis on the discourses of ‘skills’ needed for a competitive edge in the employment market. In relation to these discourses, the secondary English curriculum has emphasised development of measurable communication skills in reading, writing, listening and speaking, which are relevant to the world of work.

In conclusion, this chapter contributes to our understanding of the discourses, which have led to the economisation of the Bangladesh secondary English curriculum. The findings reported in this chapter indicate that discourses of human capital development and employment orientation of the curriculum need to be understood relationally, as these discourses are embedded in the broader political-economic context of Bangladesh as shaped by neoliberalism.

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Chapter 7

Outcome-Based Living ELT Curriculum in Higher Education in Bangladesh



Muhammed Shahriar Haque and Md. Masudul Hasan

Abstract The rapid development of information and communication technologies, as well as the impact of the pandemic, compelled ELT teachers and learners to adopt technology in many contexts, including Bangladesh. Curriculum developers have been forced to adapt their curriculum, syllabus and materials in alignment with the new skills as demanded by online teaching and as required in the present job market. This has led to the emergence of a dynamic curriculum. Such a dynamic curriculum would be emblematic of a living curriculum, which is learner-centred and enables learners to express the lived experience of contemporary society. In this chapter, we aimed to examine the relevance of an outcome-based living curriculum for the MA in ELT programme of two private universities in Bangladesh. Another objective was to focus on changes in the pre-pandemic curriculum due to the effects of COVID-19 and technology-based online education during the pandemic. Using the case-study approach, we investigated changes in the curriculum, syllabus and materials in two private universities in Bangladesh. Our results suggest that the programmes were successful to varying degrees in adapting their curriculum during the pandemic due to a number of contextual factors.

Keywords Outcome-based curriculum · Living curriculum · ELT programme · COVID-19 pandemic · Dynamic curriculum · Technology

Background of the Study

The curriculum is continually adapted in response to the changing demands of contemporary societies. The official curriculum may serve as a guide for educators containing what is seen as relevant and essential for teaching and learning. In

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the twenty-first century, the curriculum is designed in a way that addresses learners' needs. The classical curriculum, which is based on liberal arts and sciences, may not be suitable and sustainable for a developing country in the twenty-first century, particularly in the post-pandemic world where technology will play a significant role in the English language teaching (ELT) profession. University Grants Commission (UGC) of Bangladesh, in the last decade or so, has introduced Higher Education Quality Enhancement Project (HEQEP), Institutional Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) and Bangladesh Research and Education Network (BdREN). As a result of these initiatives, private and public universities have started to focus on outcome-based education (OBE). The UGC has given a directive to private universities mentioning that they need to change their syllabus every four years (see UGC Bulletin, 2020) based on the notion of outcome-based education. Consequently, several private universities have started to revise their syllabus. Due to the COVID-19 crisis, all educational institutions in Bangladesh were closed on 17 March 2020. Subsequently, online education began from the following month, as a result of which teaching methodologies and assessment criteria had to be changed to a greater or lesser extent. The initiation of educational technology implicitly began with the government's vision for Digital Bangladesh. Despite this, the transition from face-to-face to online teaching was not smooth in the wake of the pandemic crisis, particularly in public educational institutions (Bashir, Uddin, Basu & Khan, 2021). However, many private universities adapted to the 'new normal' situation out of necessity, as survival mode kicked in. The impact of this situation was more telling on graduate programmes, as ongoing graduate students had to prepare to enter the job market in the immediate future. Under such circumstances, MA in English Language Teaching (ELT) students need to acquire skills needed in the contemporary job market. This trend seems to be symptomatic of the living curriculum in the Bangladeshi context, which appears to explicitly echo Grotzer, Vaughn, and Wilmot's (2019, para 4) seventh principle of the living curriculum which is 'dynamic, changeable and responds to what is relevant at that time.'

In 2009 the UGC of Bangladesh took initiatives to introduce the Quality Assurance Cell (QAC) project to enhance the quality of higher education in Bangladesh. The aim of the QAC was to institutionalize OBE so that graduates may be equipped with some of the skills of the job market. As a consequence of the IQAC project, institutions of higher learning in this country, mainly the private universities (PU), started upgrading their curriculum when the pandemic hit in early 2020. After almost 18 months of the pandemic crisis, the curriculum developers of private universities came to realize that their curriculum should not merely address the requirement of the general or pre-pandemic job market. They further perceived that the requirements of the present job market should also be incorporated into the curriculum, which is one of the concerns of the living curriculum, as pointed out by Grotzer et al. (2019). Therefore, our general concern in the chapter is to focus particularly on the current MA in ELT students and their curriculum. We feel that some of the OBE curriculum criteria and the living curriculum may be combined to form the outcome-based living curriculum, to meet the demands of the teaching profession today. Hence, by adopting a case-study-based approach, we specifically aim to achieve a two-pronged objective:

to discuss the relevance of an outcome-based living curriculum for the MA in ELT programmes of two private universities of Bangladesh located in Dhaka city and to explore changes in the curriculum that was being taught through the online platform during the COVID-19 crisis.

We had two research questions in this study:

1. How relevant is an outcome-based living curriculum for the MA in ELT programme in private universities of Bangladesh in terms of learners' emotions, interests and lived experiences?
2. What changes were made in the curriculum due to the effects of COVID-19 and technology-based online education during the closure of face-to-face teaching?

Literature Review

The shift from a traditional or classical liberal arts education curriculum to a more goal-oriented curriculum in higher education, particularly in terms of the general and/or the specific job market, began in the twentieth century. The realization of this notion has propelled curriculum developers towards a more goal-oriented curriculum in the form of OBE rather than relying on the classical or traditional education system. This essence is reflected by Glatthorn (1993) and Guskey (1994), who opt for a more practical approach, that is, OBE; this has been pointed out by Kaliannan and Chandran (2012, p. 52):

... the input the traditional education system provides cannot prepare students for life and work in the twenty-first century. Hence, there exists a need for a more effective approach which focuses on the potential and actual abilities of the students after they are trained.

This is also happening in Bangladesh and the UGC has become involved in propagating and fostering the notion of a goal-oriented curriculum in Bangladesh where the focus is to educate graduates to have an easy access to the different employment opportunities that will become available to them. Consequently, higher institutions in Bangladesh, particularly private universities, seem to be switching from classical educational curriculum, particularly in the humanities discipline, to outcome-based education curriculum assisted by their respective IQAC. Furthermore, as a result of COVID-19 and its impacts on higher education, English department curriculum committees of Bangladesh's private universities have realized the significance of the living curriculum and the need for designing a learner-centred curriculum.

Living Curriculum and OBE Curriculum

The learner-centred curriculum is the essence of the living curriculum. It enables learners to express the lived experience of contemporary society, which is ever-changing, making the learning approach vibrant, pragmatic and pertinent. This notion

has been echoed by Kissling (2012, p. 111), who maintains that a living curriculum ‘is personal and social, engaging all elements of a person’s life,’ and Calderon-Berumen and O’Donald (2017, p. 33) emphasizes that it is also ‘dynamic, ongoing and constantly unfolding.’ Grotzer et al. (2019, para 3 and 26) point out that the aim of the living curriculum is not only ‘to help today’s learners develop the abilities they will need tomorrow’, but also to deal with ‘real-world, authentic learning—about what one needs to know to live in the world, now and into the future.’ As we have emphasized in the previous section, this concept has been realized more than ever by today’s curriculum developers in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic crisis. However, Grotzer et al. (2019, para 4) have succinctly summed up the criteria in the form of seven principles of a living curriculum that:

1. focuses on developing adaptive expertise instead of classical expertise;
2. views the learner as curious, motivated and playful;
3. centres on the epistemic (or finding out) emotions;
4. assumes that social-emotional learning is critical to all learning;
5. is developed by the one living it;
6. views expertise as distributed across members of the school community and beyond;
and
7. is dynamic, changeable and responds to what is relevant at that time.

When looking at the origin of outcome-based education, we find that it was initially proposed for the American school system in the early 1990s by William G. Spady but later on was also used for higher education (Rao, 2020). According to Spady (1994, p. 12), ‘OBE means focusing and organizing an institute’s entire programmes and instructional efforts around the clearly defined outcomes we want all students to demonstrate when they leave the institute.’ In other words, OBE is a pragmatic, result-oriented approach that has been adopted on a global scale to assure quality higher education where ‘the curriculum and instruction are driven by the exit learning outcomes that the students should display at the end of a programme or a course’ (Rao, 2020, p. 6; see Jazeel, 2020). Likewise, Obaydullah, Rahim, and Rahman (2020) point out that a critical feature of an outcome-based education system is a curriculum with specific, measurable outcomes. This concept of OBE has been embraced and adopted by the UGC of Bangladesh and propagated through the IQAC project in both private and public universities in the country.

Considering the ‘new normal’ circumstances, curriculum developers, comprising English department chairperson and senior faculty members, need to realize the significance of living curriculum and outcome-based education. We strongly feel that the seven principles of the living curriculum suggested by Grotzer et al. (2019), mainly the third, fifth and seventh, should be reflected in the outcome-based education curriculum being emphasized in Bangladesh, particularly with regard to the MA in ELT programme.

Private Universities in Bangladesh

At present there are 107 private, 49 public and three international universities in Bangladesh (UGC, 2021). It should be pointed out that there are some differences between public and private universities. One of the most significant ones is that private university education, in general, is costly in Bangladesh, unlike public universities, where education is inexpensive in most cases. Most students generally apply to public universities and those who are not selected for admission, subsequently, go to private universities. The medium of instruction of all private universities is English, which may be one of the attractions of private higher education in Bangladesh. In contrast, public universities generally use the national and official language, Bangla, for teaching, except for some departments and/or institutes where English is used. Furthermore, private universities tend to offer programmes that can dispense outcome-based education; as a result, they can acquire the necessary skills in academia and pursue their desired jobs based on the discipline they have specialized in. Therefore, the majority of the private universities in Bangladesh do not offer entire graduate programmes in subjects like history, philosophy, Islamic studies and so forth, as there are minimal jobs for people with such specializations. Sometimes, even after graduating from public universities, some students opt for Master's degree programmes in highly demanded subjects, such as TESOL, Applied Linguistics and ELT in private universities. According to Chowdhury, Absar, and Quader (2020, p. 1), 'the most popular choices for students of public universities are Arts and Humanities and Social Sciences, whereas Business Administration and Engineering and Technology are the disciplines that are in greater demand in relation to private universities.' Some of the leading private universities in Bangladesh have a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with renowned foreign universities in North America, Europe, Australasia and Asia (i.e. developed Asian countries). Public universities also have MoUs with other universities, but these are hardly publicized in admission advertisements or on university websites. Private universities, on the other hand, take every opportunity to promote their MoUs. Because of the MoUs, students from these private universities can transfer their credits and study in renowned foreign universities. To ensure quality education, private universities keep the number of students in each class small, usually within the range of 30–50. However, in public universities, the number can even exceed 150 at times.

IQAC and OBE

Quality Assurance Cell (QAC) was established under HEQEP, as already mentioned above, to set up an IQAC in every private and public university in Bangladesh. The last objective that QAC focuses on is an outcome-based education curriculum that will 'ensure good practices for quality assurance in higher education institutions

of Bangladesh' (IQAC Operations Manual, 2014). In other words, the 'good practices' may imply the academia-job industry connection that outcome-based education is trying to establish. The *IQAC Operations Manual* (2014), with reference to 'Curriculum Content Design and Review', mentions that 'IQAC will facilitate the integration of the procedure in redesigning and modernizing the curricula to accommodate the job market requirements' (p. 20). With reference to the 'Evaluation and Review', the IQAC Operations Manual (2014) implies the notion of OBE to make graduates employable based on the contemporary skills requirements of the job market, which must be taught in academia.

Discrepancy in the UGC-Prescribed MA in ELT Curriculum

On 19 October 2018, the UGC of Bangladesh published on their website guidelines for preparing a standard syllabus of a number of programmes, such as BA (Honours) in English, MA in English, BBA, MBA, EMBA, LLB (Hons.) and LLM, along with sample syllabi of those programmes. The sample MA in the ELT programme comprises only 12 compulsory courses.

The fact that the UGC has provided specific guidelines for creating the BA in English, MA in English and MA in ELT syllabi seems to implicitly contradict their specific directive regarding revision of private university syllabus every four years (see UGC Bulletin, 2020). It should be mentioned that since all the courses of the MA in ELT syllabus are mandatory (as stated in the UGC guideline for preparing standard syllabus), this programme is probably suitable for public and private universities following the closed credit system. However, the UGC-proposed MA in ELT syllabus would not be ideal for private universities following the open credit system, as there are no elective courses and the total number of courses that are offered is insufficient.

The Case Study

The aim of the study was to explore MA in ELT curriculum development based on the principles of OBE and living curriculum. We followed a qualitative paradigm to answer the two research questions. A case-study approach was adopted to evaluate MA in ELT programmes from English departments of two private universities in Dhaka city. We analyzed the data using thematic analysis (see Judger, 2016; Maguire & Delahunt, 2017).

The Programmes and Participants

The study participants comprised 45 senior MA in ELT students and 16 senior faculty members from the English departments of two private universities (PU-1 and PU-2) in Dhaka metropolitan city. Of the 45 students, 24 were from PU-1 and 21 from PU-2, attending two courses, *Syllabus Design* and *Syllabus Design and Material Development*, respectively. Of the 16 senior faculty members, seven were from the curriculum committee of PU-1 and nine from PU-2. The members of the two curriculum committees received training from QAC of UGC, IQAC of their respective universities, the British Council Dhaka, Bangladesh English Language Teachers Association (BELTA), Hornby Trust, as well as other local and foreign trainings from India, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Japan, Australia, UK and USA. Of the 45 students from PU-1 and PU-2, 15 were already working as English language teachers/instructors in Bangla medium primary and higher secondary schools and English medium schools, whose teaching experiences ranged from 1 to 10 years. Furthermore, the majority of the 45 MA in ELT students were female (i.e. 34). The MA in ELT programme of PU-1 follows the 'closed' or 'fixed' credit system and offers only nine mandatory courses, while PU-2 follows the 'open' credit system offering a total of 37 core and elective courses, from which students can choose courses based on their needs. In addition, the course fees per credit are Bangladeshi Taka (BDT) 1500 at PU-1 and BDT 6500 at PU-2. In other words, the minimum amount to complete the MA in ELT programme in the former is around BDT 54,000 and in the latter approximately BDT 234,000 in addition to admission fees and recurrent fees like activity fees, library fees, lab fees and so forth. The MA in ELT programmes of both universities (PU-1 and PU-2) follow the trimester system, enabling the intake of students three times a year, as opposed to the one-time intake a year in public universities.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data were gathered from the MA in ELT students and curriculum committee members from the English departments of two universities (PU-1 and PU-2) employing focus group interviews in Spring-2021 trimester. Focus group interviews were conducted online through the Google Meet platform and were recorded. The 24 MA in ELT students of PU-1 were divided into three focus groups and the 21 students of PU-2 were also divided into three groups. The responses of the three focus groups from each of the two private universities were combined and explained thematically in the results and discussion section. The curriculum committees of PU-1 comprising seven members and PU-2 consisting of nine were interviewed as two separate focus groups. We asked questions to the students to seek opinions regarding the present MA in ELT curriculum, its strengths and weaknesses and the living curriculum and outcome-based education curriculum. Questions for the curriculum committees focused on

the reasons for changing the MA in ELT curriculum and whether the COVID-19 crisis impacts the current curriculum and could impact the future curriculum.

To analyse the data, we used thematic analysis (Judeger, 2016; Maguire & Delahunt, 2017), which comprised the following stages: familiarizing ourselves with the students' and curriculum committees' data; transcription of all the recorded data; manually coding the responses; thematic identification and re-categorization; and production of the report.

Results

Based on the two research questions mentioned, we explain the findings in terms of three of the seven principles of living curriculum, namely, the third, fifth and seventh principles, which seem to encapsulate the two research questions of this study. With regard to the strengths of the MA in ELT curriculum, students of PU-1 and PU-2 expressed that the curriculum does contain courses that enable them to acquire skills that are somewhat needed in the job market. For instance, a participant of PU-2 mentioned that *'the mock-teaching and the practice teaching we were made to do, along with the self-reflection reports we had to write in our MA in ELT programme helped me tremendously in order to get my job in my school.'* They further mentioned that the term 'ELT' in the MA degree somehow gives them an edge in the job market, though a few mentioned that 'TESOL' also appealed to their potential employers. However, the students of both private universities said that there is room for improvement. Regarding this, the students of PU-1 mentioned that some courses (e.g. Teaching English through Technology and Research Methodology) were missing from their curriculum, which they felt were necessary. The reason for this has been explained by one of the curriculum committee members of PU-1:

Our closed credit system is a weakness of our MA in ELT programme, as opposed to some of the leading private universities which have open credit systems; their English departments can offer many elective courses, and 'Teaching English through Information Technology' is one of them.

Due to the close credit system of PU-1, some essential courses were left out. They (students of PU-1) also mentioned that the contents of the courses in the present MA in ELT programme do not seem to reflect the actual teaching skills needed in the job market (e.g. English medium schools, English version schools, primary schools, etc.). For instance, a participant of PU-1 said, *'I'm a senior English teacher of an English medium school and I need to help with the development of the curriculum; however, this course does not specifically focus on English medium school's curriculum.'* Sometimes, even after completing an MA in ELT programme from this university, a few graduate students go for professional teacher training to become more oriented to the actual teaching scenario. The students of PU-2 did not mention any weakness regarding their MA in ELT curriculum. This may be because they probably did not compare their curriculum with MA in ELT curriculum of other universities in

Bangladesh and foreign countries. The common thing that the students of PU-1 and PU-2 mentioned is that some of the teachers adopted a teacher-centred approach to teaching their courses and did not make the classes interactive, which would have enabled learners to share their opinions and experiences.

The curriculum committees of both PU-1 and PU-2 expressed similar views regarding the strengths and weaknesses of their respective MA in ELT curriculum. The two committees mentioned that when the MA in ELT programmes began, the curriculum reflected the need of the job market at that time, that is, more than a decade ago. However, the present job market for English language teachers has changed, which requires skills that are not accommodated in the curriculum created in the late 2000s. For instance, skills pertaining to the operation of various learning management systems (LMSs), educational tools and technologies and so forth are necessary for online teaching and evaluation. The MA in ELT curriculum committee of PU-2 pointed out that there were too many conditions in the present MA in ELT curriculum and they suggested giving more options for students to choose their (own) elective courses. Furthermore, after looking at other private universities' English language teaching programmes, this committee feels that the term TESOL would be more alluring and/or marketable and therefore, would like to change their programme title from 'MA in ELT' to 'MA in TESOL'. The committee of PU-1 has several reasons for changing its curriculum. At present each course comprises four credits. The committee would like to switch to three credits to maintain a status quo with the MA in ELT programmes offered by other private universities in Bangladesh. They (i.e. committee of PU-1) want to change the 'closed credit' system to an 'open credit' system, enabling students to choose more courses that are not present, that is, courses like Research Methodology, Teacher Education, Teaching Language through Technology. This amendment was prompted by the students' realization of the fifth principle of living curriculum which states that the curriculum 'is developed by the one living it,' particularly during the COVID-19 crisis. At the moment, the assessment system of PU-1 is generic and is the same for all courses in the English department, which is as follows:

- 25% Midterm Exam (written)
- 45% Final Exam (written)
- 10% Attendance and Class Participation
- 10% Final Viva
- 10% Assignment and Presentation

The above generic assessment format does not enable courses to be taught and evaluated innovatively to reflect the uniqueness of hands-on courses instead of theory-based courses. This was pointed out by another PU-1 curriculum committee member, who said, 'the rigid and fixed assessment structure (25 + 45 + 10 + 10 + 10), an imposition upon the teachers, prevents us from dispensing modern teaching techniques, methods and approaches.' For instance, too many classroom-based exams would be inappropriate in a practical course like 'Teaching Practicum'. Instead, projects, assignments and teaching-based tasks in the forms of presentation, class

observation, mock teaching, practice teaching and so on would be more relevant. Based on the above reasons, the MA in ELT curriculum committees of PU-1 and PU-2 feel that it is time they changed their respective MA in ELT curriculum as they are not dynamic and need to be more job-oriented.

This section, which provides the opinions of the curriculum committee of PU-1 and PU-2, reflects the seventh principle of the living curriculum because the curriculum committee members of both universities want to make their curriculum 'dynamic' and 'changeable' and are responding to 'what is relevant at the present time'. We attempted to find out to what extent the participants were familiar with the concepts of OBE curriculum and the living curriculum. The students had limited prior knowledge regarding concepts of the OBE curriculum and living curriculum. They mainly developed ideas of these from the present courses, from 'Syllabus Design' and 'Syllabus Design and Material Development'. However, once they understood the concepts, they strongly felt that instead of considering the OBE curriculum and living curriculum as separate entities, these should be combined to form an 'outcome-based living curriculum' (OBLC) that reflects the notion of epistemic emotions of the learners, as has been reflected in the following student comments:

Our syllabus should reflect the requirements of the job market, and the skills needed in the post-pandemic teaching situation. (a student representing focus group of PU-2)

Definitely the skills of the real-world teaching needs should be included in the MA in ELT curriculum. (a student representing focus group of PU-1)

The students of both PU-1 and PU-2 felt that this amalgamated curriculum (i.e. OBLC) would best serve their purposes because they would be equipped with the outcome-based teaching skills of contemporary society. More importantly, they would be able to pave their (own) way towards a specific teaching profession, be it at the school, college, or university level. The open credit system of PU-2 has an advantage for learners to choose courses of their choice, which is or will be based on the experiences they are living through (i.e. those already in the teaching profession) or they will live through (i.e. those not yet in the teaching profession) in the future. In contrast, the close credit system of PU-1 does not allow students to attend courses of their choice. Therefore, this creates a gap between their specifically desired teaching professions (e.g. primary and secondary schools and colleges in rural or semi-urban areas and universities) and the general ELT education they are receiving. The demography of the participants also indicates participants' socioeconomic and geographical status as well as their career options, which seem to suggest that an outcome-based living curriculum would serve them best for the MA in ELT programme. The curriculum committee members of PU-1 and PU-2 were made aware of OBE through the IQAC of their respective universities. IQAC personnel from the two universities and QAC from UGC of Bangladesh provide numerous training and workshops. With regard to the living curriculum, some of the committee members were aware of the basic concepts, whereas the others had limited knowledge. After a thorough discussion of the living curriculum during the focus group interviews, the committee members felt that they could incorporate some of its aspects and/or principles into the OBE curriculum. Thus, it seems that the MA in ELT students and

the curriculum committees of both PU-1 and PU-2 recognized the importance of the outcome-based living curriculum, which was the focus of our first objective.

In our investigation, we endeavoured to find out the skills that English language teachers need in the present job market, in the wake of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic crisis, which may not be explicitly taught in academia as these skills are not part of the curriculum. The general response to this query from PU-1 and PU-2 was the need for technological skills for online teaching, assessment/evaluation and retaining academic honesty and/or integrity, which the students and the curriculum committees of both universities pointed out. More specifically, they mentioned that since online teaching–learning is tedious and at times monotonous, teachers should explicitly teach the techniques for motivating learners and giving students appropriate in-class and out-of-class feedback, as these skills are not present in the curriculum. They also mentioned that some of the teachers themselves were not very well-versed in technology. Therefore, they had been facing an uphill battle to cope with online teaching and evaluation pressures for almost two years. These teachers not only lacked the technical and technological skills to dispense quality online education, but they were also unable to inspire and motivate their students. Consequently, the course learning outcomes (CLOs) mentioned in the course outlines of each course may not materialize due to the hostile atmosphere created because of the pessimistic approach adopted towards online teaching. Students' responses regarding the skills needed in the pre and post-pandemic teaching job market were based on the lived experiences that they had been and were going through, which is an essential criterion of the living curriculum. This idea correlates with the fifth and the seventh principles of the living curriculum of Grotzer et al. (2019). The curriculum committees have realized this; they are also experiencing first-hand what the students are going through and the skills the students will need to apply for teaching jobs in the post-pandemic employment sector. At the beginning of the pandemic, the curriculum committee provided in-house training to the teachers on using Google Meet and Chrome Extensions, Google Classroom, Jam boards, Whiteboards and Blackboards, assessing/evaluating online, making the classroom interactive/enjoyable and retaining academic honesty. Furthermore, the MA in ELT curriculum was fine-tuned to accommodate the students' requirements regarding the skills needed in the present job market such as online teaching, evaluating, presentation skills, classroom management techniques, exploiting authentic texts/materials, interview techniques/strategies, salary/fringe benefit negotiation and so forth. The curriculum committee made these changes to the existing curriculum. Due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and online teaching and assessment, the curriculum committees made these changes during the closure of all educational institutions, which began on 17 March 2020 and continued until the end of 2021. This was the focus of our second objective. In addition to the training of the teachers and changes in the existing curriculum, the curriculum committees of PU-1 and PU-2 emphasized that the different models of blended learning pedagogy would be essential for the job market and should be incorporated in the post-pandemic MA in ELT curriculum.

Discussion

The findings of this study may be explained in terms of three of the seven principles of living curriculum, namely, third, fifth and seventh, which seem to encapsulate the two research questions. Bangladesh closed all its educational institutions for face-to-face teaching in March 2020 and opened again after almost two years for onsite classes. During this closure, MA in ELT learners realized that without specific skills and with a certificate only, they would not be able to secure employment as an ELT practitioner. The results show that they expressed this through their epistemic emotions when they pointed out that the present curriculum somewhat does not match their expectations, which is what the third principle suggests. The realization that the curriculum does not match their expectations was blatantly made clear to them during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis. So many teachers of private educational institutions lost their jobs and did not get any assistance from the government. The MA in ELT learners lived through the pandemic crisis and therefore wanted to see the development of a curriculum that would match their expectations, which is relevant to the fifth principle. Furthermore, the new curricula should not be fixed but flexible because the ELT job market has changed and may change again. Therefore, the curricula need to be 'dynamic, changeable' and must respond 'to what is relevant' at the time of crisis, which the seventh principle of living curriculum implies.

The responses of PU-1 and PU-2 clearly reflect the 3rd, 5th and 7th principles of an outcome-based living curriculum. The outcome-based living curriculum of the MA in ELT programme of private universities in Bangladesh is quite relevant in terms of the learners' emotions, interests and lived experiences. The above results may also be summarized to answer the second research question. To cope with online education, teachers and students were directly trained to use online platforms in terms of teaching, learning, participating, interacting and evaluating. Consequently, the changes made to the MA in ELT curriculum during the COVID-19 pandemic were to gradually introduce technology-enhanced teaching, learning and assessing pedagogy to the learners. However, the curriculum committees of PU-1 and PU-2 did this to provide an outcome-based education based on the three principles of the living curriculum. With this intention, the technology aspect of higher education in the MA in ELT curriculum was taught by the teachers, so the learners of PU-1 and PU-2 to embrace the teaching, learning and assessment concepts of online education during the pandemic-induced closure of in-person classes. On the other hand, the changes made during the COVID-19 period were that in the long run, technology might become a fixture in the immediate and near future ELT profession, where educational institutions would adopt a blended learning approach to teaching, learning and assessment.

The study attempted to look at the significance of outcome-based living curriculum in MA in ELT programmes of private universities in Bangladesh and see the changes brought about in the current curriculum due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which compelled us to switch from face-to-face to online teaching and assessment.

However, what can we take away from the study's findings to face the post-pandemic 'new normal' academia?

One thing is for certain, whether teachers like it or not, they 'must' be able to operate the existing educational technology tools and adapt to the new ones, which will be available in the near future. There will be no place for technophobes in the post-pandemic academia, be it at the primary, secondary, or tertiary level of education. Suppose this basic concept is to be taken as given, however harsh it may sound. The post-pandemic MA in ELT curriculum should not only include one course in terms of educational technology (e.g. CALL/IT and language teaching/technology-enhanced language learning, etc.), but also embrace the pedagogy of technology-enhanced language teaching in the majority of the courses. If this curriculum is to be made functional, the present infrastructure of face-to-face teaching also needs to change because some of the techno-peasant learners need to be trained. This has been elaborated by Haque and Hasan (2021, p. 164), who argue that educational institutions should provide 'sufficient training' to 'techno-peasant learners and the necessary resource facilities along with technical support should be made available.'

One of the living curriculum principles focuses on the concept of 'lived experience' of the learners in shaping the curriculum into something that they can identify themselves with in terms of thinking of their career prospects in the future. This notion is significant for curriculum developers because they have to think of the expectations of their potential clients/students/learners. For instance, the students of PU-1 are from particular socioeconomic backgrounds and are willing to pay BDT 1500 per credit to get an MA in ELT degree with the outcome of having a career in rural and/or semi-rural Bangla medium public and private schools and colleges. However, it is quite certain that those from PU-2 would not be thinking of such career choices. This means the MA in ELT students of PU-2 would be thinking of an outcome that affords them a teaching career in English medium local and international schools, colleges and universities in the urban areas of Bangladesh or even foreign countries. For this, they are willing to pay as high as BDT 6500 per credit, which is five times more than that the students of PU-1 are paying. Hence, curriculum developers need to keep in mind the outcomes and expectations of their potential clients or learners in the contemporary job market. Therefore, they should create a curriculum that is 'dynamic, changeable and responds to what is relevant at that time,' which adheres to the seventh principle of living curriculum, as proposed by Grotzer et al. (2019, para 4).

Conclusion

The COVID-19 crisis has impacted the teaching-learning situation in Bangladesh for almost two years. Due to this impact, new skills are required to enter the English language teaching job market. Therefore, the MA in ELT curriculum to meet the challenges of the contemporary society needs to become more pragmatic to reflect the needs of the society. For instance, from the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic

in 2020 until the end of 2021, the teachers and students of private universities more or less adapted to online teaching as a reaction to the challenge they encountered. This adaptation was possible because they decided to switch from face-to-face to the virtual platform as it seemed ‘relevant at that time.’ The incorporation of a focus on the learners and their evolving needs based on lived experiences along with effective use of new technologies for blended learning, flipped classrooms and online education provided the basis for an outcome-based living curriculum. The developers of MA in ELT curriculum at private universities should have an open mind and consider adapting the curriculum based on whatever is relevant in the future, whether it is the changing job market, environmental disaster, or technological explosion.

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Chapter 8

Enacted Curriculum of Private English Kindergartens in Korea: Cases of Three Play-Based English Kindergartens in Seoul



Jeehee Kim and Tae-Hee Choi

Abstract In South Korea where English is highly valued for one's academic and career success, the English immersion programmes offered by private English tutoring institutes (English kindergartens) have become a popular alternative to general, Korean-medium kindergartens. In contrast to the highly prescriptive policy governing general kindergartens, the policy for English kindergartens allows for autonomy regarding their curriculum. Several existing studies, however, have pointed out the negative impacts of such free rein on children's balanced development in English kindergartens, due to its strong emphasis on English proficiency development. This multiple-case study, however, reveals that it is the lack of flexibility that causes these consequences, which is brought by another policy that governs the English kindergartens, i.e. private institute regulations. Guided by policy enactment theory and drawing on policy documents published at the national and institutional levels and the interviews with the directors of three English kindergartens, this study documents their practised curriculum and illustrates how unintended and unpredicted tension between policies inadvertently shapes the curriculum in play-based English kindergartens. It also shows how the directors navigate through the policy restrictions to realise their educational ideals. The chapter concludes with suggestions for the government on handling the parental aspiration for early English education.

Keywords Education policy · Policy enactment · Early English education · Early childhood curriculum · English kindergarten

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Introduction

In South Korea (hereafter Korea), English is highly valued and regarded as a gateway to academic and career success although it is seldom used outside classrooms (Choi, 2021; Chung & Choi, 2016). To get a competitive advantage in entering a prestigious university and getting a secure job, most students learn English in private sector settings such as through private tutoring or at institutes, in addition to their regular schooling. Many Korean children have already encountered English education in the private sector through various forms including studying abroad, English tutoring, English lessons at kindergartens, and private English institutes even before their public English education starts in third grade (Lee et al., 2021).

Fulfilling parents' aspirations to provide their children with an English environment as early as possible, the number of private English institutes offering English immersion programmes for preschool children has been growing. These private English institutes are often called "English kindergartens" due to the similar school hours and events to general, Korean-medium kindergartens (hereafter general kindergartens). English kindergartens are considered as an alternative to general kindergartens, rather than a supplement. Parents who send their child to a kindergarten feel they must make a choice between a general kindergarten and an English kindergarten. However, English kindergartens are classified as private tutoring institutes, under different jurisdictions and policies from those for general kindergartens. More importantly, the policy for private tutoring institutes has little prescription and control for curriculum and teacher qualification. This has led to the concern about the quality of education, especially concerning children's balanced development. Consequently, more regulation for English kindergartens regarding curriculum and teacher qualification has been suggested (Kim, 2015; Lee & Kim, 2020; Ma, 2016; Park, 2014).

Despite the expansion of private English tutoring education services to preschool children and the recent controversy over the lack of policy regulating their curriculum and teacher qualifications, there has been little research that documents the practise of these institutes and their implication for the development of very young learners. This chapter aims to address this research gap.

Literature Review and Background

Early English Education in EFL Countries

In East Asia (China, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan), the starting age for formal English language learning keeps getting lower (Butler, 2014). Early English education in EFL contexts has drawn scholars' attention. As Butler (2015) points out, studies about English language education amongst young learners in East Asia have covered various aspects such as societal and global factors influencing the early English

education, children's language development and affective/attitudinal issues, native and non-native English speaker teachers, teaching methods, and the influence of parents and communities. However, many of the studies looked at the primary school level whilst research on English education at the pre-primary level is relatively scarce (Zhou & Ng, 2016).

English education amongst very young learners aged 2–5 mostly happens in private education sectors as formal English education starts in primary schools in many countries. Amongst East Asian countries, mainland China, Hong Kong, and South Korea appear to experience expansion of private English education amongst very young learners. For example, in China, bilingual kindergartens and private English institutes offering English education to Chinese children as young as 2 are increasing, and parents make an endeavour to give their children the competitive edge in education by providing early English education (Sun, Bot, & Steinkrauss, 2015). However, as Sun et al. (2015) claim, little research has examined very young EFL learners and the private sector where they can start English language learning before formal education.

Amongst a few studies researching English education amongst preschool children in EFL contexts, Ng's (2013) studies in Hong Kong provide fruitful implications. Ng (2013) investigated the pedagogic conditions in English teaching in Hong Kong kindergartens. She claimed that the curriculum guidelines prescribed by the government emphasised "attending to children's needs and establishing a language-rich environment as well as an interactive play-based approach" (p.4). However, from observations of three English teachers' lessons and interviews with them, she found that the teachers used a product-oriented approach where teachers dominate the class and heavily use form-focused activities rather than engage children in meaningful interactions in English. Particularly, Ng (2013) mentions the textbook-led pre-specified curriculum as a factor inducing a product-oriented pedagogy and claims that it is against the underlying principles in early language learning. In another study, Ng and Rao (2013) found a wide variation in teachers' instruction time, curriculum planning practises, and use of the bilingual environment. Ng and Rao (2013) suggested the absence of specific official guidelines as a potential cause for such diverse practises. The findings about Hong Kong kindergartens' English language teaching offer insights into similar issues found in the Korean context such as the high demand for English education at the pre-primary level, the lack of detailed guidelines on English education for preschool children, and the challenges in ensuring equal access to quality English education as a result.

Issues Related to English Kindergartens

Only a handful of studies have specifically examined English kindergartens. The studies investigating English kindergartens' curriculum commonly mention heavy focus on textbooks and English language learning in the academic-oriented environment (Bae, 2010; Lee, 2006; Park, 2014), putting children's holistic development at

risk. Such focus on reading and writing seems to be aligned with a product-oriented pedagogy induced from the textbook-led curriculum (Ng, 2013) to demonstrate children's English development to parents. Lee (2006) voiced his concern that such a focus on textbooks might cause stress and hindrances to the creative development of children. Kim (2014) suggested the emphasis on learning and studying as a cause of children's stresses. Besides, Kim (2012) mentioned that children's sociolinguistic competence was negatively affected by the imbalanced focus on acquiring knowledge and skills in English than communicative competence. There are fewer chances to acquire the rules of social interaction required in a classroom and the different nature of the interaction between a child and a non-Korean teacher from different cultures. Also, English kindergarten teachers were not required to possess teaching experiences or a teacher certificate (Bae, 2010). Consequently, some teachers did not have a degree with early childhood education (ECE) major nor prior teaching experience (Park, 2014).

Regarding the issues related to curriculum and teacher qualifications of English kindergartens, studies made policy suggestions about teacher training, more thorough educational background checks (Park, 2014), and reinforcing requirements in teacher qualification (Kim, 2015). Concerning curriculum, thorough guidance and supervision of curricula and development of an English curriculum for children considering children's developmental stages and the national English curriculum have been suggested (Kim, 2015; Lee & Kim, 2020; Ma, 2016; Park, 2014).

As the above studies suggest, interventions and regulations from the government are important especially for the quality of tutoring (Bray & Kwo, 2014). However, understanding the creative and complex nature of policy implementation (Choi, 2015) and considering different contextual factors (Choi, 2017a, 2017b; Choi & Cho, 2016) is necessary for their effective implementation.

Policy Enactment Theory as a Conceptual Frame

Policy has been defined in various ways, suggesting its complex and contested nature. Other than deciding what to do, non-action constitutes a policy, which prioritises some values and marginalises others (Jones, 2013; Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). Whilst these definitions focus on policymaking, "policy as process" models address the whole picture of policy including the stage where a policy is implemented and practised. In these models, policy is considered as "a continuous cycle where it is made, re-made during implementation" (Jones, 2013, p. 8), which sometimes brings about unintended outcomes.

Ball (1993) emphasises the complexity of policy saying that policies are representations that are encoded and decoded in complex ways, rather than merely written policy texts. A policy keeps being contested and changing within and across processes with different interpretations in different contexts (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). The unpredictability and complexity of policy implementation result from the interaction between the policy, policy actors, and the context (Ball, Maguire, & Braun, 2012;

Rizvi & Lingard, 2010) as well as the creativity and negotiation involved in the process (Ball et al., 2012). Emphasising the complex nature of policy, Ball et al. (2012) introduced enactment as “beyond implementation”, arguing that the policy texts cannot simply be implemented in a vacuum. Within the situated context, a policy agent interacts with social constructs creatively and reflectively when implementing policy (Choi, 2019).

The existing studies about English kindergartens investigated curriculum, operational and educational practises, and the impact on children; however, they did not investigate the interface between policy and practise. Acknowledging the complex nature of policy implementation and interaction between the policy, policy agents, and the context, this study examines enacted policy on curriculum with policy enactment theory as the conceptual framework.

Considering that the policy for private tutoring institutes has little prescription and regulation on curriculum and teachers, this study aims to understand how English tutoring institutes enact the policy and develop their own institutional policy. To do so, the research takes a qualitative and case study approach (Creswell, 2018; Yin, 2018), driven by the following overarching question and sub-questions:

How do private English tutoring institutes for preschool children in Korea enact the policy on curriculum and instruction that has little prescription?

- (a) What is the policy given by the government on curriculum and instruction?
- (b) What is the institutional policy on curriculum and instruction?
- (c) How is the policy given by the government interpreted and translated at the institutions?

Method

Data Collection and Analysis

In addition to documents including national policy texts and institutional documents as summarised in Table 8.1, data were collected through semi-structured interviews. As the study concerns practised curriculum, at the national level, the national shadow education policies addressing curriculum, teachers, and instruction were analysed. Institutional policy documents were also collected from the participating institutes’ websites. Interviews were conducted once with the directors to examine the interpretation, translation, and recontextualization of policy and the factors influencing enactment of policy. The questions about curriculum, national and institutional policy, and contextual features affecting the institute were asked. Employing thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), the data were analysed through iterative processes of descriptive coding, recognising patterns, and identifying emerging themes.

Table 8.1 Summary of collected policy documents

Level	Policy documents	Article	Description
National	Act on the Establishment and Operation of Private Teaching Institutes and Extracurricular Lessons	Article 2-2	Types of private teaching institutes
		Article 12	Curriculum
	Enforcement Decree of the Act on the Establishment and Operation of Private Teaching Institutes and Extracurricular Lessons	Article 3-3	Classification of curricula
	Special Act on the Promotion of Public Education Normalisation and Regulation on Pre-curriculum Education	Article 8 (4)	Prohibition, etc. against activities inducing pre-curriculum education or pre-curriculum learning
	Early Childhood Education Act	Article 28-2	Ban on using the word 'kindergarten' in the institute's name
Institutional—Headquarter	Website	N/A	Welcome message, educational philosophy, information on affiliation, teacher training materials, and curriculum explanation
Institutional—English kindergarten	Website	N/A	Introduction, information on curriculum
	Yearly goal of each class	N/A	Teachers set general one-year goal for their class for year 2020

Research Sites and Participants

Three English kindergartens in one of the famous educational districts in Seoul, which are known for high educational zeal and passion, have been examined. This educational district has many private tutoring institutes and prestigious schools, many of whose students enter prestigious universities. The participating institutes are medium-sized play-based English kindergartens that pursue a less stressful English learning environment for students. English kindergarten A (hereafter EK A) has been run for 20 years, English kindergarten B (hereafter EK B) for 19 years, and English kindergarten C (hereafter EK C) for 8 years. EK A is a branch of a medium-sized

Table 8.2 Profile of the interviewed directors

Participants	Sex	Kindergarten	Service year as a director	Academic background	Previous career in ECE
Charles	M	A	13 years	Statistics	NA
Susan	F	B	17 years	Nursing and Counselling	1. Nursery nurse 2. Day care centre
Mary	F	C	5 years	Early Childhood Education	1. Kindergarten teacher for 11 years 2. Assistant director at EK C for 3 years

English education company. The director of each kindergarten was interviewed, to learn of the institutional policies which are not official but in place (see Table 8.2 for their profile).

Results

National Policy

Focus on Suppressing Private Education

The government announced that it would work on suppressing excessive use of shadow education amongst preschool children (Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, 2017). Providing childcare services and educating parents about the importance of play and a child's own pace of learning and development were expected to help reduce the dependency on shadow education. Investigation on preschool children's shadow education expenditure was conducted in 2017, aiming to reflect its result on policy. The government now monitors illegal acts of private tutoring institutes and rewards the reporting of the illegal acts, such as false advertisement, false information regarding tuition, using the word "yuchiwon" [kindergarten] in advertisement and name of an institute, not displaying names of instructors and tuition information, and violating teaching times set by the government.

Little Prescription on the Curricular Content

In contrast to the tight control over the operation and management, matters such as curriculum and teachers, the core that shapes children's learning, are hardly regulated. All that is required regarding the curriculum of English kindergartens is that it should be "practical", and the teaching of foreign language addresses "students' needs". Other than this, the policy does not suggest specific guidelines for

curriculum matters such as student assessment, teaching approach, and learning contents. Without guidelines, the curriculum is not and cannot be centrally evaluated or monitored by the government, leaving it up to individual institutes.

Institutional Policy

Prioritisation of Developing the English Language

Since English kindergartens are English teaching institutes, teaching English takes a big part of the curriculum. When asked to briefly introduce the curriculum of the institute, every director started explaining in terms of English learning. According to Susan, in EK B, English-related subjects take 50–60% of classes; class schedules of EK A demonstrated that 69% of class time was on language arts. Amongst the language arts subjects, phonics or reading classes took the most part (see Table 8.3 for its detailed schedule).

In all three kindergartens, the yearly goal focused on developing English ability. However, there were varieties in language skills emphasised in each institute. According to Mary, EK C emphasises the balanced development of all skills of speaking, listening, writing, and reading including phonics:

Year 1 classes focus on phonics, speaking, listening, and reading whilst year 2 classes, as they do not need separate phonics lessons, have less phonics and more listening, grammar, or writing. As for year 3 classes, the students do not need speaking textbooks and they can use English for everyday life, so they get extra writing or more reading.

The shift of focus from basic communication skills (oral language) to reading and writing (written language) was found also on the website of EK A. However, the director of EK A, Charles put more emphasis on literacy skills such as reading and phonics over the others.

Completing reading, that's the goal for year 1 5-year-olds. For 3-year-olds, the general yearly goal is phonics. Working on phonics and mastering phonics, at least on coursebooks, for 3-year-olds. As for 4-year-olds, you know, it is being able to read basic words for the first semester. That will be phonics one and two (in terms of the coursebooks). Master, and then from the second semester they will start reading, learning long vowels or something.

Charles seemed to think that communicative skill is not useful in Korea because school exams do not assess listening and speaking and English is not used for communication. Charles (EK A) says:

Listening and speaking, an output skill, are seldom used, and there is no exam assessing these skills in Korea. Students start to learn a, b, c, d only when they become ten-years-old [Year 3 Primary]. As for reading, the improvement is dramatic. Although it is not a royal road, children enjoy [reading] without feeling stressed. Their moms are happy. Besides, we [teachers] see students' improvement.

Table 8.3 Timetable of EK A

Class (age-years of enrolment ^a)	Language arts										Total
	Phonics (reading)	Writing	Coursebook	Storybook	Speech	Library	Musical English	Total	Non-language arts	Total	
3	10	3	5	2	1	1	1	23 (66%)	12 (34%)	35	
4-1	9	4	6	2	1	1	1	24 (69%)	11 (31%)	35	
4-1	10	3	6	2	1	1	1	24 (69%)	11 (31%)	35	
4-2	9	3	7	2	1	1	1	24 (69%)	11 (31%)	35	
5-1	9	4	6	2	1	1	1	24 (69%)	11 (31%)	35	
5-1 and 2 ^b	10	3	6	2	1	1	1	24 (69%)	11 (31%)	35	

^aFor example, class 4-2 is a class of 4-year-olds who have enrolled in the institute for two years or those newly joining but whose English ability is matching the current students. Usually, they have 3-1, 4-1, 4-2, 5-1, 5-2, and 5-3

^bA mix of 5-year-olds newly joining with not much English learning experience and those who have been attending the institute for two years

When English is not used in daily life and when English is only introduced as a subject several years later in Year 3 Primary, visible and drastic learning outcomes, which the customers want, become important in shaping curriculum.

Whilst all three institutes, just like any other English kindergartens, provide an English immersion environment to help students be exposed to English and improve their English skills, the relative focus on each skill differs across institutes. Susan (EK B) did not mention much about the English language curriculum as she believed that the parents send their children for overall learning, not just for English learning; Charles (EK A) seemed to focus on literacy skills; Mary (EK C) focuses on oral and aural skills. For instance, Mary notes:

All year 1 classes, regardless of the students' ages, focus on basic speaking and listening and phonics....It will be more beneficial in their later learning for them to be able to communicate...Once they go to primary school, they will have English lessons for what, two hours maximum? If they learn English for 30 minutes or an hour, it will not be effective. That's why speaking and listening are put almost first.

Overall, the case English kindergartens address what is assumed to be needed by the students, and which will help students most when they enter the primary school, the next level of education.

Emphasis on Fun and Stress-Free Learning

All three kindergartens value fun and a low-stress learning environment. Susan (EK B) emphasised making the environment where children feel happy and comfortable. She wished children find learning enjoyable and fun.

I think children should feel joyful whilst staying here. Well, it will be great if they feel happy, happy, yes. ... I really wish that children have the memory like "it is such a fun place. Learning is so fun here. I do enjoy learning". To make that happen, and because I wish it happens, I try to make such an environment.

Mary (EK C), on the other hand, sees the limitation in this approach.

I feel that teaching English to these little children is unethical. To be frank, I am working against my own educational philosophy. I do not believe that it is possible to teach English to children whilst making them feel happy and joyful, because it cannot be pleasant and enjoyable for such little children to learn English.... I just try in a way that children learn English with less stress, in an easier way. And just letting children experience as many things as possible, being kids. That much.

The website of EK A and its headquarter emphasises fun and excitement. Music is described as learning with fun songs and chants, and musical English is described as exciting music, dance, and role-play. Fun is sought also from educational events such as watching a "fun" puppet show and Christmas "party". However, from the interview with Charles, it was found that EK A changed its focus from fun to a more academic environment, and Charles (EK A) chose to emphasise reading considering students' stress levels.

So, in the past, it was more like, it felt that [our] students go to a kindergarten [and have fun]. More like that rather than [studying] hard. Mmm. But now, we are [reducing] that aspect and adding more academic aspects. ... With reading, children's English ability gets improved sharply, and you know, although it might not be the royal road, anyway children do not get stressed out, and they get satisfied.

The students of English kindergartens spend around six hours usually from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the institute. Considering the long school hours, characteristics of very young learners such as short attention span, and the perceived importance of a joyful learning environment for children, the three English kindergartens try to provide a fun and less stressful learning environment. Although this is not what is required of English teaching institutes by the national policy exactly, the directors put much effort to make learning fun for their students. This can be due to the perceived needs of their students, the directors' educational philosophy, and/or discourses about children's right to play and emotional well-being promoted by media, research, social organisations, and the Ministry of Education.

Non-English Subjects

Despite the fact that these kindergartens are registered as English language institutes, their curriculum aims for not only English ability but also for whole-person development. On the website of EK A and its headquarter, different attributes such as creativity, thinking skills, problem-solving, social skills, cognitive ability, emotional development, physical health, and expressive language skills are said to be developed. Subjects such as story, show and tell, science, art and craft, cooking, good manners, musical English, and Physical Education (PE) are described as subjects helping students' whole-person development. Whole-person development and developing character, intelligence, creativity, and physical health are frequently mentioned in the introduction of the curriculum. Children are expected to experience things themselves and develop emotion, creativity, physical health, and cognitive ability. To review the enacted curriculum, EK A has several subjects that are not about the English language. For example, all classes have song time, art projects, crafts, musical instruments, multicultural study, physical activities, and science. 3-year-old students have a class called "Good Manners" where students develop a good personality with thematic lessons. Likewise, Susan from HK B mentioned thematic lessons and content learning such as art, PE, creativity lessons, and logical thinking classes. Mary also said EK C has PE, science, and musical instruments "as a side".

As Mary used the term "side", non-English subjects are seemingly treated as less important and mostly for fun. To this marginal state of the other subjects, Charles (EK A) also concurs:

Others [other subjects] are for leading [students] towards there [reading and outcome], for now maybe supplementary? For example, [students] keep studying, and then well, let's give them a break, that's what song & chant is for, and others [as well].

In fact, what drove this auxiliary status is the regulation. The directors commonly evaluated non-English subjects as “important” and “necessary”, and beneficial for children’s whole-person development and emotional well-being. However, English kindergartens are not allowed to have such subjects because they are “English teaching” institutes. All three directors said that what they were doing was illegal to be honest. Mary was reluctant to provide details on non-English subjects. Charles expressed his frustration about the situation where his educational philosophy conflicted with policy and his strategy to address such difficulty.

Charles: Unlike my designated role [to teach English only], my ideal education is whole-person development, but it is not approved by the Ministry of Education.

Interviewer: Why so?

Charles: Because the essential purpose of the institute is, it is a language institute and we are supposed to teach the language only. But then why are you teaching art, math, and physical education? It is illegal, you know. ...So, we even changed the name of PE class from PE, physical education to EA, English activity. Language institute, because it is a language institute, [everything] has to be related to English. In any way, unconditionally. We cannot just say that we use English [in such non-English classes]. We cannot teach art. ...

Susan (EK B) expressed her wish for free operation so that she could provide what is really important to children. For now, to realise their educational ideal, all three institutes incorporate such subjects anyway even though they understand that it is illegal.

English kindergartens’ students are preschool children, and they spend six hours every weekday there. With English language subjects only, it will be hard for children to develop physically, emotionally, and socially. In addition, they need to develop the first language, Korean. To meet those needs, they provide non-English subjects either using a strategy not to get caught or hoping that they would not get in trouble.

Institutes’ Enactment of the Conflicting National Policies

The national policy requires the curriculum of English kindergartens to be “practical” and address “students’ needs”. Contrasting this seemingly loose policy, another policy limits the curricula to only English language learning subjects. The enacted institutional policies demonstrate their interpretations of “practicality” and “students’ needs” and their policy resistance.

The directors interpreted practicality as the contribution of the learned English skills to students’ future academic success. Mary focused on developing children’s communicative skills as the number of English lessons and English input would decrease in primary school. To succeed academically, students would need to compensate the future loss by mastering it in advance. In contrast, Charles considered listening and speaking ability is not useful in helping students because school exams do not assess listening and speaking and English is not used for communication. Besides, Charles regarded it practical to improve English drastically whilst children attend the English kindergarten and make their moms happy with the result,

considering that English is not taught for the first two years in primary schools. For these reasons, he focused on literacy skills.

The fact that the curriculum centred around English learning suggests that “the needs of students” is interpreted as improving English skills. Nevertheless, being mindful of students’ young age, relevant characteristics, and their emotional well-being, the directors considered a fun and low-stress learning environment necessary for the students. Besides, all three directors interpreted students’ needs as not only English language learning but also social, cognitive, physical, and emotional developments.

To meet the perceived needs concerning holistic development of children, the directors resisted and ignored the limiting policy. They were aware that it was illegal to include non-English subjects but offered diverse subjects, either making them look like English subjects or simply hoping not to get caught.

Discussion and Implications

The national policy concerning English kindergartens gives the founder and operator the autonomy in addressing the needs of students, but the education must be limited to teaching English only. At the institutional level, while the enacted curricula did address social, cognitive, physical, and emotional development needs, as noted by Lee, (2006). The curriculum focused on developing English ability—with English language subjects being the majority and learning objectives for each year centering around English ability. Moreover, the curriculum was heavily textbook-led, echoing Ng’s observation (2013) on Hong Kong kindergarten’s curriculum as well as studies on Korean kindergartens (Bae, 2010; Kim, 2012, 2014; Lee, 2006; Park, 2014), limiting the flexibility which is required to address children’s needs. The teacher training materials from these case kindergartens mainly covered the content of the textbooks and how to use them in lessons, and the directors often mentioned course-books when explaining the curriculum. Children’s social, physical, and emotional development were taken care of through minor subjects such as art and physical education and school events, which were considered as a “side” curriculum and as “breaks” in-between English lessons.

This language focus, which may not be necessarily addressing the needs of all students, resulted from the tension between the two policies concerning early childhood education of English in private institutes. Although, as the directors perceive, including the subjects that are not related to English language learning is necessary to address children’s developmental needs, teaching them is illegal according to the private education policy that governs the curricula for English tutoring institutes, which prescribes that only English-related subjects can be taught. The directors were indeed willing to commit an illegal act of including non-English subjects in order to be true to their educational philosophy, but it was only to the degree that the acts can be kept under the radar. For instance, one used a strategy of changing the subjects’ names in a way that they seem relevant to English learning.

This was especially for the case of the directors with early childhood education background. In doing so, the policy regulating the subject contents was resisted. The directors ignored the policy although they were concerned about the consequences. The directors who see parents' aspiration for English education for their children and educational ideal for children were found to struggle with the policy preventing them from including non-English subjects.

This study shows that the minimal policy guideline on the curriculum of English 'kindergartens' created such dilemmas. The guideline only mentions "addressing students' needs" and "being practical", while there is no specification. While such high degree of freedom may allow for room to make the curriculum more locally relevant, it does not provide the firm ground to meet those criteria, when the pressure away from those criteria is more stringent. For instance, as the parallel, shadow education law has the power to penalise the institutes, the institutes obliged themselves more to its requirement, though regrettably its primary concern is whether individual households' investment into private education is reduced, rather than whether children develop in an age-appropriate way. While in practice these institutes play the role of kindergartens, the government's disregard of this reality led the participating children to miss the opportunity to develop as a whole person, a crucial need for preschoolers. A similar phenomenon was observed in the context of Cambodia. Little prescription on multilingual curricula combined with maximal autonomy given to curriculum development committees resulted in unintended disregards of students' needs (see Chan & Choi, 2020). The findings suggest that in order to safeguard the appropriate care for children, it is necessary to examine the collective effect of all policies affecting the education directly or indirectly, and to provide a specific enough curricular framework to fall back on. The findings also suggest that some educational practitioners find ways to buffer unintended detrimental impacts from policy ensembles. The directors in this study navigate through policies and resist the regulation and provide other learning experiences to realise their educational ideals. This study corroborates previous studies showing that mid-level policymakers are guided by their own educational goals and beliefs in translating the upper-level policy by putting up a show when the regulations reinforce punitive measures for non-compliance (Choi, 2019). Indeed, the policy process is organic and unpredictable, and the practised policy is only reminiscent of the plan but develops its own characteristics, interacting with the contextual features and the actors therein (Choi, 2018). Along the same line, the shadow education policy, as it is, cannot suppress parents' aspiration for early English education and willingness to invest their income into private education. The educational stakeholders will find ways to achieve their goal (Choi, 2017b) in this case, developing the indispensable capital of English proficiency in their children for a better future. Thus, rather than trying to control the symptom leading the children to miss the crucial period of wholesome development, the government should, for the short-term, find a way to embrace their desire and provide foundation for English curriculum for very young learners that help their holistic development. In the long run, it needs to find ways to address the distorted desire to teach English to the children at a tender age at all costs (Choi, 2021).

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Chapter 9

“Stories About Ourselves”: Collaboration, Teacher Development, and Creating Culturally Relevant Graded EFL Reading Materials for Bangladeshi Learners



Cherie Brown

Abstract Much discussion surrounds the concepts of “authenticity” and “ownership of English” in EFL/ESL circles today. Other concerns include professional development pathways and self-perceptions of non-native teachers of English, and their reports of poor student motivation and unsatisfactory classroom engagement, which may be reinforced if EFL learners perceive learning materials to be foreign, culturally inappropriate, or irrelevant. This chapter outlines an international collaborative materials/teacher development project—“Stories About Ourselves”—which aims to address these concerns within the Bangladesh EFL context. With support from Bangladesh English Language Teachers Association (BELTA) Executive Board members, the project culminated in the “Stories About Ourselves” Web site, offering free, graded English reading texts, written by Bangladeshi writers, that reflect the life and culture of Bangladeshi people. The project aims to build Bangladeshi English language teachers’ professional and linguistic skill sets via materials development training and enhance their confidence, while also providing culturally relevant reading resources to engage the interest of learners. The project continues to build a bank of Bangladeshi resources and now provides opportunities for research into the impact of the materials on learning outcomes, and of project involvement on the skills and perceptions of Bangladeshi EFL teachers, with possibilities for similar implementation in other international EFL contexts.

Keywords Teacher development · Materials development · Cultural relevance · International collaborative projects

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Introduction

“Connecting the dots,” the theme of Steve Jobs’s 2005 Stanford University commencement address, linked his learning about various typefaces, in the calligraphy class he joined after dropping out of university, to the much-fêted success of the Mac computer (Jobs, 2005, para 2). His message still offers a useful guiding principle to teachers and learners everywhere, since it is the process of making connections that enables us to progress, and like Jobs, to create something new, and hopefully of lasting value.

In the spirit of connecting the dots, this chapter merges ideas from various sub-fields of English language research and practice, and important human connections that led to “Stories About Ourselves,” a collaborative teacher and materials’ development project undertaken by the author and EFL teachers in Bangladesh that aims to provide free graded reading materials, by Bangladeshi writers for Bangladeshi learners, with a Bangladeshi content focus (Brown, 2020).

Authenticity

The first “dot” of our connection process is that of “authenticity.” The definition of this term has long been debated. Gilmore (2007) provides a comprehensive overview of this complex discussion, explaining its shift from a focus on learning materials, to recent, broader notions relating to dimensions such as the nature of native-speaker language, “realness” of context, purpose of language use, users’ perceptions of English texts, the nature of classroom interactions, tasks and assessment, and issues of cultural integration.

The debate also extends across disciplines. Thus, a clear, agreed definition of authenticity has become elusive. Attempts to resolve our understanding, and to apply the concept to EFL materials’ development and use, often end with Morrow’s definition, “An authentic text is a stretch of real language, produced by a real speaker or writer for a real audience and designed to convey a real message of some sort” (Morrow, 1977, p. 13) implying that truly authentic materials attain this standard. (Note, “real” is not elaborated here either.)

Morrow’s definition reflips the focus to examples of language in use and the specific characteristics of the materials in which these are presented. However, it seemingly omits an important dimension relating to three previously mentioned areas, learner perceptions of texts, learning purposes, and cultural integration and appears limited, since it refers primarily to examples of language produced *by* native speakers *for* native speakers which are appropriated for use as instructional materials. Moreover, the content of these materials remains largely focused upon native-speaker cultures, contexts, and experiences. Thus, while the materials contain genuine examples of native-speaker language, such a definition of authenticity fails to consider

whether or not learners evaluate these as being *authentic to themselves*, or relevant and applicable within their own life contexts.

For learners of English in so-called outer or expanding circle settings (Kachru, 1992), we need to consider more than whether or not materials contain good examples of native-speaker language, or whether they effectively facilitate integration into target language communities. What appears to be missing is consideration of whether or not target learning materials truly resonate with learners themselves.

Instead of just considering authenticity as some external quality by which we judge the relative worth of specific materials or learning experiences according to native-speaker standards, or their efficacy in enabling learners to communicate “effectively in the target language of a particular... (native-English)... speech community” (Gilmore, 2007, p. 98), perhaps we should also more carefully consider the authenticity of learner *response* and whether learners recognize themselves as the intended audience to whom the material is directed.

When seeking to evaluate authenticity of language materials, it also seems important to ask whether they are written for and used by the right audience. In most cases, they are not, since they are typically presented to non-native learners of the language as examples of ways in which native speakers interact with each other. Thus, the language they contain no longer fulfills its original function. Moreover, if learners perceive content as not having been written for them, can they engage and identify authentically with it, bringing aspects of themselves and their own experiences to the material, to enable them to make full sense of a text? Again, this seems unlikely, meaning the material may be perceived as alien, as something *inauthentic*, in fact.

Additionally, we need to ask whether the materials enable learners to develop knowledge and skills in ways that do not subtly push them to believe they should abandon aspects of their own identity. We do well to ask if, inherent in the content, and beyond its informative purpose, there is an unspoken expectation that learners should assimilate foreign concepts and values, and merge their sense of self with target culture standards and norms.

Likewise, we need to consider whether learning materials enable acquisition of the target language in ways that are directly useful and relevant to learners’ own purposes and goals, within their own unique cultural settings. This requires us to question the assumption of the desirability of integration into target language culture(s) as an ultimate objective for *all* learners and thus to challenge much of the cultural content and values inherent in many commercial resources available today.

Similarly, we do well to ask whether learning materials cater to the diversity of individual learning pathways. While they may help achieve the narrower goals of the few (e.g. entry into foreign universities or international business careers), it is possible that they may be so divorced from many learners’ desired, lived, or potential lived experience, as to be irrelevant. If foreign language texts and materials fail to convey something real and applicable to the many who have to use them, or fail to generate opportunities for building the kinds of language skills required as practical tools within their own various cultural milieux, we may ask whether they, in fact, fail to be authentic, even if they are genuine samples of current native-speaker language.

Other questions still remain, however. Is the learning of English, if conducted via irrelevant, unfamiliar, or even inappropriate content and resources, in danger of becoming a hollow exercise, or, as Radtke (2013, p. 8) describes, simply "... an instrument which has to serve a single function, i.e. facilitating international communication..." In the end, if learning does take place, does the acquisition of English skills end up becoming a mere affectation, important to the socially aspirational, or a total fancy, akin to efforts made by certain SciFi fans to learn Klingon in order to communicate with unmet aliens?

Ownership

The much-debated question of who owns English is our second "dot." Increasingly, the English used throughout the world does not involve native speakers at all (Crystal, 2008). Other researchers insist that English is the property of all who use it. Graddol (1997, p. 3), for example, described the "growing assertiveness... (among)... countries adopting English as a second language that English is now their language, through which they can express their own values and identities, create their own intellectual property and export goods and services to other countries," while Canagarajah (1999, p. 1) claims that in many post-colonial societies, "the English language has become too deeply rooted... to be considered 'alien'."

While English is indubitably the global language of commerce, trade, research, diplomacy, and cultural exchange today, and is being used and studied on an unprecedented scale, it is by no means always regarded as a neutral or positive influence, particularly in previously colonized countries or contexts where minority languages are threatened. In fact, use of English, and an acceptance of claims about the ubiquitous nature of ownership and its present global ascendancy, particularly in its dominant Anglo-American forms, do not necessarily go together, on the part of non-native speakers, with a personal, *proprietary sense* of English as one's own. Canagarajah (1999, p. 5) explains, "perspectives on ownership of English, along with knowledge construction in ELT... is still dominated by Western scholars," implying that Western scholarly pronouncements on the supposed ownership of English by non-native speakers do not necessarily reflect the perceptions of non-Western scholars nor the opinions of non-native English language teachers and learners, or everyday non-native users of English, even those with a high level of proficiency.

In spite of the protestations of 'others' that English belongs to all, do non-native English users, in reality, genuinely consider themselves as "owning" English? In many cases, the answer may come as a surprising and resounding, "No!" and our exclamation, "But English belongs to everyone!" may sound false and patronizing. In fact, we may need to ask whether a *sense* of ownership of English is a worthy goal, especially if it is tied to acceptance of forms used by dominant world powers, the values and practices of foreign cultures, or to achieving native-speaker levels of competency, what de Souza (2017, p. 138) calls, "Colonization of the mind."

Clemente and Higgins (2008) provide a pointed example of this, quoting a student teacher, who though claiming ownership of the language, exclaimed bluntly,

I have a Mexican accent. English is mine from the moment I put it into practice... but when I say that the language is mine, I do not mean to say that I want to take the culture that comes with it. (p. 123)

Such opinions may also be reinforced by the continued predominance in non-native-speaker settings of commercial learning materials with an Anglo-American English bias. Until such time as non-native speakers of English begin, as Graddol (1997, p. 1) suggested, to choose to “express their own values and identities, (and) create their own intellectual property” in English, English will likely continue to be perceived by many as something *owned* by foreigners and outsiders, but *used* by non-native speakers. Thus, attempting to *allocate* English language ownership to non-native speakers, in a generous spirit of Western liberal egalitarianism, might better be replaced by listening more attentively to the voices of those directly involved, who may, in fact, beg to differ. Holliday (2005, p. 9) reminds us of this, citing Kuo, a Taiwanese teacher, “It’s been clear that I’m a language learner from the periphery, and - listen to this - I prefer to speak for myself.”

Professional Development and Self-perceptions of Non-native English-Speaking Teachers

Another “dot” relates to the self-beliefs that non-native English teachers may hold about their professional competencies and English language skills. Generalized statements about this will not be applicable in all cases, as if non-native teachers of English were a monolithic bloc. Thus, narrowing the focus of our investigation, while still considering what makes for successful professional development overall, may help us better understand the circumstances and needs of teachers within specific contexts, and may be more useful. By gathering information from teachers themselves, within their own specific settings, we may begin to understand *their* self-perceptions, needs, and preferences, and thus find ways, together, to provide more effective development opportunities, improve professional and linguistic skills, and promote greater professional self-confidence.

Walter and Briggs (2012, p. 1) analyzed 35 “evidence-based studies of teacher professional development,” identifying seven useful principles. They state

...the professional development that makes the most difference to teachers

1. Is concrete and classroom based.
2. Brings in expertise from outside the school.
3. Involves teachers in the choice of areas to develop and activities to undertake.
4. Enables teachers to work collaboratively with peers.
5. Provides opportunities for mentoring and teaching.

6. Is sustained over time, (and)
7. Is supported by effective school leadership.

These principles are not context specific, so Bangladeshi teachers too should benefit from their application. A study of rural Bangladeshi teachers by Mamun (2015) showed they feel proud of being EL teachers and consider themselves valued in their communities. However, while many are aware of modern pedagogical practices, they are often unable to implement these, express dissatisfaction with their English skills, and indicate a need for more professional training and language use opportunities.

Mamun's study supports earlier claims by renowned Bangladeshi educator Rahman (1999), who indicated that many non-native EL teacher trainees lacked adequate English skills to teach the language effectively. In a different context, Liu (1998) also supported this, showing that non-native TESOL teacher trainees studying in a native English speaking country desired a targeted language improvement component to their training course, in spite of having received tertiary level EL training in their own countries. Thus, it appears that the need for non-native EFL teacher trainees to improve their personal EL skills may be more broadly applicable.

Rahman (1999) also explained that Bangladeshi teachers tend to teach intuitively, their theoretical training barely influencing their subsequent teaching practice, and recommended that teacher trainers address this in their training programs. Again, Liu (1998) agrees, stating that teacher training needs to recognize the settings, conventions, beliefs, and practices that bound the teaching of English in the contexts in which trainees will teach.

Over twenty years later, similar concerns about the professional qualities of Bangladeshi EFL teachers and their target language competence, and the best form of teacher development required, appear to remain, as the author's personal interactions with Bangladeshi English language teachers over more than a decade indicate. In her experience, Bangladeshi English teachers working at all educational levels consistently continue to indicate a desire for better professional development opportunities and chances to hone their personal EL skills.

The challenge is how to deliver a high standard of professional development that is also consistent with those criteria needed for success that Walter and Briggs described, while also addressing particular context-specific needs and simultaneously acknowledging teachers' personal belief systems. As Liu (1998, p. 7) suggests, this also involves the development of an "active competence" in English language skills within the training process.

In other words, teacher development should go beyond what Sowden (2007, p. 310) refers to as inculcation in knowledge of how to fulfill "mechanistic expectations." By assuming a more holistic approach toward teacher development, and integrating teachers' (and learners') cultural distinctiveness, we may begin to see that professional development is also a form of "self-development ... (and) that ... our personal qualities, attitudes and experience are what finally count." (Sowden, 2007, p. 310).

Issues Relating to EFL Learners in Bangladesh: Perceived Problems, Needs, and Preferences

One final fourth “dot” needs consideration. That is, we need to understand something about the perceptions of Bangladeshi learners of English as a *language* and of English language *learning* in general, and their problems, needs, and preferences. Because “Bangladeshi learners of English” is such a broad category, in order to find a useful focus, and because the information relates specifically to origins of the “Stories About Ourselves” project, the following discussion deals primarily with university level learners of English in Bangladesh.

In 2017, at the Nepal English Language Teachers Association (NELTA) conference in Kathmandu, Akter and Begum presented the findings of a study they conducted in their Dhaka university EFL reading classes. Their purpose was to “investigate whether learners’ native culture- and context-based reading texts foster greater interest and interaction in class reading activities” (Akter, 2018, p. 60). The study sprang from their informal observations of their learners, who demonstrated low levels of English proficiency despite years of formal instruction, and generally poor classroom participation and motivation.

They explained that their students had difficulty decoding the cultural content of their reading texts. Akter states “...the available materials... largely focus on aspects of culture or contexts that are foreign and unfamiliar to them... and they face difficulty, when reading English text... in activating their schemata and building on their existing world knowledge.” Akter (2018). Simultaneously, students also grappled with new, unfamiliar target language. The cognitive demands of trying to understand both the language and the cultural content of the materials were too great in sum and, as mentioned, resulted in low interest and poor classroom engagement. By way of intervention, Akter and Begum introduced English reading materials with a Bangladeshi cultural focus and gathered qualitative data on student reading materials’ preferences, attitudes, and classroom behavior.

Although their study was small and did not attempt to quantify the impact of the new materials on overall language proficiency, it indicated that Bangladeshi university level learners participate more actively in reading classes when using materials with which they are able to identify, with a subsequent (informally) perceived improvement in language skills and motivation. Calling for more research, Akter (2018) acknowledges that the dearth of culturally relevant materials is a hindrance to implementing these suggestions:

Although English has become an international language, there seems to be little emphasis, yet, on the parallel development of teaching materials promoting local cultural content, in spite of the fact that there is a growing recognition of the importance of including local or source culture. (p. 62)

This presupposes an acceptance of the desirability of ongoing teacher training in how to develop these materials, since they will need to emerge from within local EFL contexts. Akter reiterated the call by Zacharias (2005, p. 63), for “local teachers to be empowered regarding how to develop ... materials to facilitate the language

development of their learners...” This is important, since commercially produced resources that meet the requirements for cultural relevance and also Bangladeshi Ministry of Education curriculum standards, and are at appropriate levels for learners across the education system, are neither readily available nor affordable, and even if they were, accessing them on the scale that is required is difficult. Thus, such materials will most likely have to be created by Bangladeshi teachers themselves, who report a lack of skills and a need for appropriate training.

The desirability of training teachers in materials’ creation and the benefits of this is discussed more fully by Crawford (1995), but she stresses the importance of this, saying...

Teaching materials are not neutral and so will have a role to play in deciding what is learnt.... For this reason, it is essential that materials’ writers be familiar with the learning and teaching styles and contexts of those likely to use their materials... In other words, teachers and their experience have a crucial role to play in materials production as well as in their critical classroom use, and the best writers are probably practicing teachers. (p. 2)

However, as mentioned, within the Bangladeshi context, teachers consistently express a lack of confidence in both their professional skills (which includes target language materials’ development) and their target language proficiency. Moreover, the demanding nature of existing curricular requirements means teachers’ time is limited so that there is often a heavy reliance on commercial resources designed for and created by others, which are more readily available. Thus, efforts to encourage Bangladeshi teachers to produce their own target language materials, especially without suitable training and ongoing support, are likely to be limited in effectiveness. With these factors in mind, and in an effort to find a workable solution, the “Stories About Ourselves Project” was initiated.

The “Stories About Ourselves” Project

The “Stories About Ourselves” project evolved directly from Akter and Begum’s work. After attending their NELTA presentation, the author began to ponder ways to achieve the dual goals of building a bank of culturally appropriate graded reading texts in English, while also providing an opportunity to improve the professional and English language skills of Bangladeshi teachers as they learned how to create these resources for themselves. An idea began to form.

The first step was to gather a committed group of experienced Bangladeshi teachers, who were willing to invest time and effort, understanding that involvement would be long term. With the assistance of BELTA Executive Board members, a training workshop was arranged, coinciding with the annual 2018 BELTA/THT English Language Education Programme in collaboration with “Teachers Helping Teachers” (THT), a special interest group within the Japan Association for Language Teaching. The author’s previous involvement in these programs provided the opportunity to introduce the stories’ project idea and investigate its feasibility. The BELTA Executive Board approached nine university teachers, who agreed to participate.

The project background was explained, using Akter and Begum’s insights, and then training steps to produce the required materials were outlined. After discussion, the workshop participants, who concurred with Akter and Begum’s conclusions, indicated a willingness to be involved in the project.

A short Bangladeshi story, written by one of Akter’s students, was used to demonstrate how to adapt a story with local flavor for use in EFL classrooms. Workshop participants were shown how to use ‘Vocab Profile’—an online vocabulary analysis tool, created by Cobb (2002), and Heatley, Nation, and Coxhead (2002) to simplify and begin grading a story. The participants then began writing their first stories. Finally, contact details were exchanged to enable story submission, and participants were added to a closed Facebook group for ease of information sharing and mutual support.

Over the next year, participants submitted stories, which were edited, and learning activities were added. The number of stories was initially small, but enough to warrant continuing, and ongoing interactions kept the group connected and motivated. Patience and commitment were key, since all activity was voluntary and had to accommodate everyone’s existing responsibilities across barriers of distance and time zones.

In late 2019, the author returned to Dhaka, and another meeting was arranged with the 2018 workshop participants to discuss progress, along with two newcomers who wished to join the group. Participants expressed pleasure that the project was continuing. The most pressing question was how to establish a Web site to enable publication of the materials, which EL teachers in Bangladesh could easily find out about, and to which they would have easy, free access. The suggestion was made to ask the BELTA Executive Board to append a dedicated “Stories About Ourselves” site to the existing BELTA Web site, a request which was granted, and with BELTA’s generous support, the Web site debuted in July 2020.

This proved a turning point, since it allowed the writing team to see the tangible results of everyone’s longtime efforts. The publication of their stories, and the direct association of these, and the project Web site, with the much-respected BELTA organization, spurred a flurry of writing activity which has continued. Contributions now include submissions from other writers beyond the original group, and writers who are also academics can include their publications in annual performance reports. Members of the expanding writing group demonstrate a strong sense of project ownership, making positive suggestions about how to improve the Web site, for example, the addition of downloadable PDFs of stories for classroom use.

Awareness of the project is also growing. Newly published materials are advertised on relevant social media pages, and with the recent shift to more online professional events, information about the project has been disseminated across Bangladesh and beyond.

Connecting the Dots

To return to our “dots,” we may now see how the “Stories About Ourselves” project acts as a means to connect each of these into an integrated whole.

Authenticity

Insofar as authenticity relates to materials’ content, the published “Stories About Ourselves” stories are all written by Bangladeshi writers specifically for Bangladeshi readers. When the original project workshop participants were asked “How important do you think it is for your learners to have a range of graded English language materials that feature cultural content relevant to Bangladesh?” 75% replied it was very important to have a balance between local material and that which featured foreign cultural content, while the remaining 25% felt it was important to some degree (Brown, in progress). Not one participant believed that the use of materials with relevant cultural content was unimportant, confirming their desirability.

Relating authenticity to learner *response*, readers readily identify with the content of the stories. Their reading material no longer demonstrates only how native speakers interact with each other, but now also includes realistic examples of how non-native Bangladeshi speakers of English might function in English, in contexts that make real sense to them. After reading one of her stories, the Bangladeshi colleague of one writer emailed her, saying, “I have enjoyed the story very much, I think the students will also be able to relate themselves with the story as the time, place and incidents of the story are very much familiar with their real-life experiences” (Huda, private email correspondence, November 7, 2020).

The project materials do not imply any need to accept or conform to foreign ideas and values, or pose unnecessary challenges (e.g. understanding unfamiliar cultural allusions). A feedback comment from another writer’s colleague explained, “I also like how the cultural references make it unique for our Bangladeshi students” (Huda, 2020). In other words, Bangladeshi students immediately understand the cultural references because they are uniquely Bangladeshi, freeing them to focus more on the target language itself. The material affirms who they are, where they are, with no expectation of integration into a vague, distant target language community with which they may feel no affinity. As one project writer explains...

When our project became tangible, when everyone could see it, I started getting messages from my friends and colleagues. One friend contacted me after eight years with a comment about one of my stories. “I couldn’t remember how to play bouchi.” (she said), Your story reminded me (of) all the details. You have revived a popular sport of our time for a new generation. The story took me back to my childhood days. (Huda, 2020)

This is not to say that all foreign textbooks and materials should be discarded. That would be both unrealistic and undesirable, since as part of the global community we all need greater understanding of those different from ourselves. But the presence

and use of Bangladeshi stories in English now offer a relevant, viable supplement to the Anglo-American-centric materials currently in common use in Bangladesh.

Ownership

As for our second “dot,” involvement in the project, and the materials themselves, enhance the development of a *self-cultivated* sense of ownership of English in distinct ways. As Graddol (1997, p. 3) proposed, Bangladeshi teachers and learners can now “express their own values and identities, (and) create their own intellectual property.” Learners can now see models of how they, realistically, might employ English, as they read stories that reflect who they are, and engage in activities using English to create new, meaningful discourses of their own. Knowledge of English may then be perceived as simply another practical skill, to be employed toward their own ends, irrespective of whether learners ever find themselves in a native-speaking environment or not. This understanding comes without the added pressure—implied or self-imposed—of the need to attain native-speaker-like ability. Thus, the potential for a more confident acceptance of English as one’s own, even if not perfect, appears a realistic possibility.

Professional Development and Self-perceptions of Non-native English-Speaking Teachers

The project also addresses issues relating to professional development, aiming specifically to improve the skills and self-confidence of the participants. In an early informal survey (Brown, in progress), half of them responded that though they had sometimes used graded reading material with their students, they had never read any academic material about extensive reading or the use of graded readers, nor attended any training event in which these were discussed, so they knew little about the rationale underpinning these. Likewise, half of those surveyed indicated they only knew a little about the importance of high frequency vocabulary. Project involvement has, therefore, provided opportunities for participants to learn more about their professional field via direct practical experience.

Though the project is limited in scope, its significance has been striking and is evident in participants’ informal feedback. For example, one participant explained, “Using software to analyze the vocabulary of a reading text was new to me. The thing I enjoyed the most was the ideas about how to develop materials on our own.” Brown (in progress). Another wrote...

I felt really good that instead of copying materials from websites or textbooks, I have been able to make up my own materials that I am using for the class. It gave me a good sense of ... satisfaction... students also got a good impression about my identity as an author... (We teachers often attend) seminars, workshops and conferences but just (this kind of)

professional development is not everything... Our writing project can make people realize the need to collaborate, write and publish instead of sticking to conferences and symposiums only. (Brown, in progress)

And another explained,

After twenty years of being a teacher, and after participating in the workshop, I (finally) became a materials' developer. It was not an easy task ... and... it didn't happen overnight. (Now I know about) Lextutor. I knew about Bloom's taxonomy earlier, but... (now I know)... how to utilize Bloom's taxonomy in creating higher order thinking skills questions. (Brown, in progress)

In addition, the project has also demonstrated its worth in enhancing participants' English language skills and confidence. Describing the negotiations that occur with the author (as editor) while creating a finished story, one participant stated,

I looked at your edits and realized that writing in simple and easy language is important to rise as an author... The experience of working with you really helped (me) to write in simple and easy language so that my readers can easily understand without the need to open dictionaries... It's not easy to start writing on any topic for people who speak English as a foreign language. Once I started putting my thoughts together, I spent one or two hours and then could see that my ideas have turned into coherent stories, although initially I did not have confidence to make (them). (Brown, in progress)

Returning to the principles for successful teacher development outlined by Walter and Briggs (2012), the project fulfills all the stated conditions. The project workshop and mentoring process have focused on developing both classroom materials and sound pedagogical practice, while allowing flexibility for teachers to use materials and implement activities in ways they see fit. Collaboration between the author and project members, and their interactions with each other, has enabled local expertise from outside each participant's setting to be utilized. All participants are volunteers, directly involved in the process of writing and adapting their own stories, and can make free choices relating to their self-development and the tasks they wish to undertake. There are no publishing deadlines, and writers may write as much and as frequently as they wish. Project participants identify with and function as members of an identifiable group, and collaborate with their peers, offering support as mutual mentors, creating further opportunities to scaffold each other into new levels of professional expertise.

The project has now been underway for over two years and continues to provide opportunities for sustained professional learning and support. With the backing of BELTA, and the core group of writers who are also university educators, the project has a degree of effective local leadership. In a shared presentation with the author, in which she described how the project had impacted on her personally, one of the original project participants commented, "It is possible to materialize many positive changes if teachers' agency is at work." Demonstrating how the project has motivated her awareness of the need for inclusivity, she has invited her own students to contribute stories, stating, "The most beautiful thing of our project is our "I to We" journey..." (Brown & Huda, 2020).

Issues Relating to EFL Learners in Bangladesh: Perceived Problems, Needs, and Preferences

When dealing with learners’ problems, needs, and preferences, our final “dot,” it appears a positive shift is possible. As the study by Akter and Begum (2017) indicated, learner participation and motivation improve when they use relevant materials and can activate their existing cultural schemata. Thus, if materials are interesting and appropriately leveled, greater student involvement and more positive attitudes are realistic expectations. After introducing the project stories to her class, Ms. Huda explained...

I have also tried my stories in my classroom. One, about wedding shopping, led to some of my male students becoming very curious to know the names of the wedding jewelry... The female students were very excited and they were in competition with each other for sharing their own experiences. (Brown & Huda, 2020)

Her learners moved from being passive to passionate classroom participants. The culturally familiar story content had also initiated learners’ desires to know and share more about their own cultural traditions. Another teacher on reading the same story commented, “This story will definitely trigger more responses from our students” (Brown & Huda, 2020).

Conclusion

The “Stories About Ourselves” project has successfully integrated a number of theoretical and experiential “dots” within a healthy and expanding framework of practice. As described in the section above, the key issues of concern have been addressed successfully. However, there are still several more “dots” to connect.

One important ‘dot’ that remains to be connected is that of local leadership, and the need to find someone based in Bangladesh to take over the project management role so it eventually becomes an entirely Bangladeshi enterprise. Since the emphasis of the “Stories About Ourselves” materials’ creation project is on the development of both teachers and culturally relevant materials, it seems fitting that the project itself should also become more fully organized and managed by local Bangladeshi people themselves, with diminishing input and management from outside.

While having one person assume the role of project manager would be ideal, there is potential for a team of volunteers to do this. The role currently includes ongoing one-to-one mentoring of writers/teachers, soliciting and editing new submissions, creating activities to accompany each published story and negotiating these with individual story writers before publication on the Web site, and collaborating with the professional web design/maintenance personnel. Such a person (or people) needs to have strong EFL professional, administrative, and EL skills in order to maintain the high quality of publication. Moreover, a vision for the project and a sense of creativity to explore potential growth is a must. The project management role could

also be created as a new professional position within Bangladesh if suitable financial resourcing were made available. This would also enable ongoing Bangladesh-based materials' development training programs to be made available to a wider pool of Bangladeshi educators, further enhancing the quantity and quality of locally generated, culturally relevant learning and teaching resources, and expanding the use of the materials across the country.

Finally, there is a huge need for more quantitative and comparative research to investigate the efficacy of the homegrown "Stories About Ourselves" project materials as a means to improving learners' English language proficiency levels, not only in relation to these materials and the Bangladeshi context, but with culture specific materials in other country contexts as well.

Shift in perceptions of learner identity in English, via use of the "Stories About Ourselves" materials, is also a compelling area for future academic study. Both qualitative and quantitative studies would give greater information about the importance and efficacy of culturally relevant materials in language learner personal development. It is pleasing to note that steps in this direction are now taking place, especially in the recent classroom-based action research work of Bangladeshi university academics (Huda & Brown, in progress).

Likewise, investigations into the project's capacity to promote teachers' professional capabilities, and its impact on teachers' linguistic confidence and skills, remain to be completed. Such studies will enable us to improve the project's existing teacher training/mentoring process and will also inform wider teacher training efforts in materials' development.

With further work such as that suggested here, we may soon be able to say with some degree of confidence that our "dots" have finally been connected, and a clearer picture of the long-term effectiveness of the "Stories About Ourselves" project may finally materialize. Of greater significance, however, would be the implementation of similar projects in multiple global EFL contexts, with a view not only to filling the existing gap in the availability of appropriate culturally familiar EFL teaching and learning resources, but also as a means of opening up more practical pathways for investigation into this newly emerging and important field.

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Chapter 10

The Challenges of Developing ELT Materials for Higher Secondary Schools in Bangladesh: The Case of the English Textbook



Arifa Rahman

Abstract This chapter approaches the issue of materials design from the standpoint of viewing language education as situated in a political and ideological space. The complexity of developing state-produced textbooks in a foreign/second-language setting in the south Asian, post-colonial country of Bangladesh is explored. Taking the English textbook currently being used at the higher secondary level as a case study, the analysis is undertaken from several angles, viz., national curriculum policy and objectives, state guidelines to writers, the theoretical approaches to materials design, the instructional content, tasks and activities, as well as the teaching, learning, and assessment practices prevalent in the country. The findings reveal a network of entangled systems that impinge on the entire education system within which the textbook is situated. These praxes, shaped by micro-political, administrative and socio-cultural procedures and rituals create a complex reality that is produced and re-produced in the educational milieu, creating challenges that the materials development enterprise and its classroom usage encounter. Looking forward, a critical re-calibration of these practices is suggested to be worked out, by policymakers, stakeholders, and concerned actors through negotiating meaningful changes in partnership with all concerned parties and the wider community.

Keywords Language ideology · Curriculum dictates · Materials development · Textbooks · Entangled practices

Introduction

Bangladesh, a post-colonial nation-state, following on from its 200-year history of British colonialism in the Indian subcontinent, has included English in its curriculum since the early twentieth century. After the country seceded from Pakistan in 1971, it was propelled by a strong sense of national identity resulting in *Bangla* (also known

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as *Bengali*), the single majority language of 98% of the population, being established as the constitutionally approved national language. Bangla took precedence in education, administration, media, and in other domains. All educational institutions were mandated to use *Bangla* as the medium of instruction. Yet, English, although sidelined, continued as a compulsory subject in the curriculum (Rahman, 2007).

Within a matter of two decades since the country's independence, this relegation of English gradually led to a pragmatic realization that English was a valuable tool for socioeconomic development (Riaz & Rahman, 2016). This perceived ideology paved the way for a stronger presence of English in education with the introduction of a sequence of macro-level language-in-education planning directives that aimed at providing more space to English in the curriculum (Hamid & Erling, 2016). This was reflective of a growing tendency in numerous Asian polities renewing their language-in-education plans vis-à-vis English (Tsui & Tollefson, 2007) which gradually influenced the shaping of a neoliberal trend in state policies (Hamid & Rahman, 2019).

Bangladesh's national education policy still adheres to the colonial three-tier system of primary, secondary, and tertiary stages. Learners receive 12 years of schooling with English as a mandatory subject, starting right from primary year one. At the secondary stage, two public examinations, at the end of years 10 and 12, respectively, operate as a strong gate-keeper for university entrance and other career paths. As such, society perceives these as high-stake tests, both wielding a strong impact on learning and teaching practices (Khan, 2010).

The National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) is the education ministry authority for formulating the school curriculum at the primary and secondary stages and for developing, publishing, and distributing all subject textbooks to students at state schools throughout the country. This chapter investigates this centralized English materials development enterprise with a particular focus on the higher secondary level English textbook (*English for Today* for classes 11–12), henceforth EFT.

The aim of this study is to address the following questions:

1. To what extent does the current English textbook at the higher secondary level (introduced in 2015) meet the objectives of the 2012 national curriculum for English?
2. What is the theoretical approach of the book and how are content and learning activities designed and arranged?
3. In relation to the textbook, what are the teaching, learning, and assessment practices that are prevalent?
4. How relevant is the current textbook to the teaching–learning context for which it has been designed?

The chapter first considers the issue of materials design within the national curriculum with a specific focus on the state-produced EFT textbook for the higher secondary level. The literature on language materials development is reviewed briefly, and the extent of its reflection in the national curriculum guidelines for textbook development is examined. The study methodology is presented next, and an analysis

of the data with the resultant findings is reported. Finally, the discussion is critically extended into a broader network of praxes that impinge on the entire education system revealing an entanglement of long-term competing practices that pose continuing challenges to the materials development exercise.

English Language Materials Development in a Local Context

Before I go into the materials development practices in Bangladesh, it is relevant to give a historical background to educational policies regarding locally produced materials. Although there is a huge market for commercially produced English language teaching materials produced by native-speaking writers for well-known publishing houses, in economically richer regions, the fact remains that today English has gained an international lingua franca status, used by a vast number of non-native speakers of English that outnumber native speakers by millions. Hence, there has been a widespread global trend of developing teaching/learning materials locally, particularly in the Global South. In addition, issues of authenticity (Gilmore, 2007; Richards, 2001), social and cultural aspects (McKay, 2004) and even moral values (Widodo, Perfecto, Canh, & Buripakdi, 2018) have influenced locally produced English materials.

Bangladesh, from its inception, has clung to the idea of using literary texts as the sole ingredient for learning English in schools—a notion popular among all stake holders. For nearly two decades in the 70s and 80s, the higher secondary school had a state prescribed textbook containing an anthology of short stories, essays, and poems by eminent English writers spanning centuries (Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Maugham, O’Henry, among other renowned writers). The book contained short literary texts unaccompanied by any activities or tasks, leaving classroom teachers to apply their own methods of teaching. Most learning experiences from this period recount that teachers merely read out the text and translated them into the L1. Except perhaps for reading aloud, no other skills were developed.

Then, in 1986, NCTB brought in a curriculum change. It introduced a textbook for Classes 11 and 12, *English for Today*, Book 8 (edited by M. Mohiyud-Din & M. S. Huq, 1986). It included short texts written by non-native speaker Bangladeshis on topics of history, language, culture, life style, economy, agriculture, etc. There were no literary texts although language skills development tasks and activities were included. The entire community including academics and the public raised a storm of protest. Literature experts considered it a blasphemy that authentic English literature had not been included. A vigorous campaign was launched in the media against the book, particularly on two issues—first, that it was impossible for non-native speakers to write ‘good’ English texts, and second, the textbook lacked literary value. The media constantly pointed out a variety of cases of ‘faulty’ and ‘unacceptable’ English used in the textbook. The outcry reached such a momentum that the NCTB finally withdrew the HSC book within two years, and the previous literature anthology was quickly re-introduced. In a research study on this text book, Rahman

(1996) analyzed the norm specification of English language texts for the teaching of English in the context of Bangladesh. He used a number of educated native English speaker respondents to comment on the unacceptability factor of language used in the textbook, and his findings showed that the texts in the 1986 textbook were acceptable to native speakers and were evaluated as having been written in simple, clear, and lucid English suitable to the language level of the learners. He strongly argued that in ELT materials design, there was no criterion giving priority to literary texts.

Despite policy changes and attempts at innovation in curriculum development since the early 90s, this strong lobby for the preference of literary texts nurtured by influential literature experts still holds sway and sometimes affects textbook formulation, planning, and practices. The next English materials writing exercise was undertaken by the English Language Teaching Improvement Project (ELTIP) with donor assistance from 1998 to 2002. Besides a well-planned teacher development scheme that was scaled up to cover most regions, a team of trained materials writers developed the textbooks for classes 9–10 and 11–12 along the principles of the then popular communicative language teaching (CLT) approach. These books too were often criticized by this lobby for not including enough literature in the lessons. The ELTIP books were scrapped after a period of 14 years, and a new set of locally produced books were developed. This new textbook is the subject of this study.

English Materials Development Within the National Curriculum Framework

‘Curriculum’ generally means an authority’s decision regarding what is deemed appropriate to learn within a specific area, how it is going to be delivered, and how the learning will be measured. The curriculum within an educational context has been conceived in three broad ways: prescriptive, descriptive, and critical-exploratory (Marsh, 2004). While the first two approaches are familiar, the third, an outcome of post-modernist critical theory, incorporates issues of rights, equity, and social justice into the curriculum equation. Bangladesh is familiar with the prescriptive and descriptive modes of curriculum design as exemplified by national educational stakeholders. The third approach, the critical-exploratory, has surfaced only lately (see Ahmed, 2021; Hamid, 2016).

In terms of relevance to this chapter, my point of departure is the National Curriculum for English (grades 11 and 12) formulated by the NCTB in 2012. This centralized curriculum document was prepared soon after the Bangladesh National Education Policy (2010) had been re-formulated after a ten-year hiatus by the government.

A summary of the several macro-level national education policies and commission reports in the country since 1974 indicates how English, as a school subject, which was relegated at independence to the position of a foreign language to be taught from year six, gradually gained importance to become an integral part of the school

curriculum (Chowdhury & Kabir, 2014), influenced mainly by pragmatic considerations of perceiving English as a socioeconomic development tool. Since 1976, attempts at lowering the age for English learning are evident in the educational documents with recommendations for increased quantitative years of learning, without any apparent thought for quality. Finally, in 1986, all state schools countrywide were mandated to introduce English right from primary year one, thus providing 12 years of English subject learning throughout the school system.

2000 National Education Policy

The attempt to provide more space for English is evident in the national education policies formulated in 2000 and again in 2010. In 2000, the policy statements regarding the teaching/learning of English appear to be a wish list with confusing or even conflicting policy dictates and without a convincing framework for implementation. These confusing positions are reflected in successive national education policies and commissions. Chowdhury and Kabir (2014) analyze this as the result of various regimes advancing their own political agenda and ideology with scant attention to the country's genuine educational requirements.

The 2003 National Education Commission re-emphasized the teaching of English right from the primary level with more professional training for English teachers. It is interesting to note that a Foundation English course for all streams was introduced (a six-month English language module) at the tertiary level, thus increasing further the space for English language learning.

2010 National Education Policy

The 2010 National Education Policy, the outcome of the experimentation of previous committees and commissions and maintaining the rhetoric of national identity shaped during the 1971 Liberation War, aims at qualitative rather than quantitative improvement. English is now considered an essential tool for developing a knowledge-based society. Prominence is given to English writing and speaking right from the primary level. English as a medium of instruction (EMI) could be introduced at secondary school. For the first time, logistics were included, such as increasing the number of adequately trained English teachers. Once again, it was reiterated that English would be compulsory at all levels. English (along with Bangla) would be the medium of instruction at university. There was a need to translate English books into Bangla.

2012 English Curriculum for Classes 11–12

Based on the National Education Policy of 2010, NCTB developed the *National Curriculum: English for Grades xi-xii* (National Curriculum and Textbook Board, 2012). Upholding the ideals of the Liberation War, it endorses the need for learning English to prepare the future generation to cope with the challenges of the globalized twenty-first century. It focuses on teaching–learning English as a skills-based resource to be applied to real life, meaningful situations. In addition, it includes the inculcation of knowledge, cultures, values, and positive attitudes leading to the pursuit of higher education and a better access to local/global employment.

The English curriculum, presented on pages 24–40, is both prescriptive and descriptive. It endorses the CLT approach which was introduced in 1996 and had already been adopted in the English textbooks developed for classes 1–10 in terms of content and pedagogy. It is intended to address the needs of concerned stakeholders by incorporating a range of reading items, literary texts, and integrating traditional grammar forms with communicative language functions. Furthermore, there is a focus on developing learners' extensive reading skills with the use of supplementary reading materials.

Guidelines for Textbook Writers for the Current English Textbook

The directives for the textbook writers are given under 19 points (pages 34–35) reflecting the main objectives and learning outcomes. They relate to the necessity of reflecting the values discussed in the previous section. Themes and topics had to be interesting, realistic, authentic and appropriate for learners' age, cognitive abilities, and affective domains, while the language would be appropriate to context and culture. Instructions were to be short and worded in simple English. The textbook would contain a selection of language tasks in order to offer suitable practice for developing the four language skills. There would be opportunities for learning through social interactions enacted through dialogues, language games, puzzles, thus making learning fun and entertaining. Grammar items and vocabulary would be graded and provided in context and be recycled to create scaffolding opportunities. Additionally, literary pieces such as short stories, narratives, poems, and other genuine extracts would be used for appreciation, creative, and critical assessment. Pronunciation is also given due importance, but guidance for that would be provided in the teacher's book which would also include samples of classroom instructions, supervising students, checking answers, using easy and simple English. Interestingly, the teacher's guide has not been written as yet. Finally, the textbook had to be attractive and contain colorful illustrations.

Trends in Materials Development and Evaluation

Materials are “anything which can be used to facilitate the learning of a language” (Tomlinson, 2012, p. 143). These include course books, real-life objects, advertisements, graded readers, a whole range of audio–visual materials, games including computer-generated ones, and more recently, countless digitally generated content. Materials writing is an endeavor involving the creation, adaptation, and use of materials aimed at enabling language acquisition and development (Tomlinson, 2016). It is also an area that analyzes learning materials—the underlying principles, the design, and the production, leading to a systematic evaluation to assess its suitability for a certain target group.

Teaching or instructional materials are a key component in most language programs. Whether it is a textbook or any other prepared material, instructional materials are generally the basis for much of the language input and practice that learners get in the classroom (Richards, 2001), and this is particularly true in EFL/ESL situations where linguistically less competent teachers and learners find it a powerful support tool to complete a set syllabus (McGrath, 2006). This section presents a synopsis of the trends that have influenced the design and development of English language materials in ESL/EFL learning and teaching contexts as well as the approach adopted for evaluating existing materials.

Materials Development

Based on Richards and Rodgers’s (2001) seminal work on the approaches, methods and techniques’ framework, the literature on materials development for English courses since the 1990s has grown around two viewpoints. The first, in tune with the *humanistic* perspective forwarded by Stevick (1990), recognized the cognitive principles that facilitate second-language acquisition, and the second is the history of the teaching methods that culminated in the focus on CLT and TBL (task-based learning) approaches of the 1980s and 1990s. Both these viewpoints are acknowledged as informing pedagogy as well as the development of language-learning materials.

Spinoffs from research by sociolinguists such as Hymes, Austin, and Searle in the 1960s and functional and educational linguists like Candlin, Breen, and Widdowson in the 1970s, strongly suggested that the former structural theories of language had failed to account for the uniqueness and creativity of language as well as its functional and communicative potential. Since the 1990s, materials development researchers have spawned a well-informed and influential materials development school of thought, widely endorsed by the language education fraternity.

Tomlinson (2011) has presented core principles drawn from second-language acquisition research and cognitive psychology that are relevant to developing materials for the learning of non-native languages. He advocates that materials:

1. should achieve impact, i.e. create interest, curiosity, or attention through the novelty of topics, variety, attractive presentation, appealing content, and sometimes offering challenges;
2. should help learners to feel at ease and develop confidence by not creating anxiety and stress and being friendly, supportive and inclusive of learners' lived experiences, engaging learners in self-discovery activities;
3. should be perceived as relevant and useful and expose the learners to language in authentic use that is rich and varied, without relying too much on controlled practice;
4. should provide learners with opportunities to use the target language to achieve communicative purposes through a variety of tasks that simulate real life, meaningful activities.

In addition, there is an emphasis that learners' attention should be drawn to the linguistic features of the input. This necessitates the requirements of declarative knowledge (i.e. the language system) as well as procedural knowledge (i.e. the way language is used). Cognitive psychology contributes to the recognition of learners having different learning styles and being influenced by emotional and affective states of mind—these provide a strong rationale for introducing variety in tasks and activities. There is an awareness that materials should take into account the fact that the positive effects of instruction are usually delayed, hence necessitating re-cycling and providing frequent and ample exposure to the instructed language features in communicative use. Although this implies that learner readiness is an unpredictable factor primed by mental, social, physical attributes, it also refers to the readiness factor that Krashen (1982) proposes through his $i + 1$ input hypothesis, i.e. learning tasks should be only slightly higher than the learner's current level of competence but at the same time not be too easy as to be boring.

Furthermore, there has been an inclination toward developing teacher's guides to accompany the students' instructional materials. Teacher guides are considered to have a positive impact on developing the pedagogic skills required by teachers to use the materials to their advantage (Rahman, 2002). The importance of producing independent materials to develop teachers' understanding of the common approaches to instructional materials has also been promoted in the materials literature. McDonough, Shaw, & Masuhara (2013) have developed hands-on approaches for teachers to develop the necessary skills to analyze the approaches to materials design, to evaluate critically the principles on which they are based, and to assess their relevance to their own teaching contexts.

Materials Evaluation

A variety of approaches to evaluation is found in the materials development literature. Tomlinson (2011) maintains materials evaluation is a systematic evaluation of the significance and effectiveness of the materials taking into consideration their goals

and learner objectives. He proposes a three-step procedure: ‘pre-use’ highlighting predictions of potential value, ‘whilst-use’ dealing with awareness and description of learners’ engagement and actual behaviors while the materials are being used, and finally ‘post-use’ which shows what happened as a result of using them. Tomlinson (2012) further analyzes to what extent the design of the texts, exercises, and activities are informative, instructional, experiential, eliciting, or exploratory.

Littlejohn (2011) suggests three levels of analysis that aim at an inferential examination of materials. The first level highlights the explicit nature of the materials (publication date, intended audience, type of materials, classroom time, physical aspects, and the intended use). The second level deduces the exact roles of teachers and learners and the constituent tasks in the materials. The third level builds on levels 1 and 2 and infers the apparent underlying principles of the materials for selecting and sequencing both tasks and content.

McDonough et al. (2013) have furthered this three-step exercise to include an external evaluation, an internal evaluation, and an overall evaluation to highlight factors of usability, generalizability, adaptability, and flexibility.

I have drawn on the sources discussed here to undertake the analysis of the EFT book for this study, especially on the aspects of instructional materials advocated by Tomlinson (2012).

Methodology

Working within a constructivist-interpretative paradigm and a belief that “educational research must of necessity be social in its orientation” (Scott & Usher, 1996, p. 1), I undertook this study with an awareness that reality is a complex phenomenon comprising of multiple realities that do not admit orderly events or simple cause-effect relationships (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). I, therefore, opted for a qualitative approach to this study. I used the following tools of data collection: content analysis, questionnaires, and semi-structured interviews of teachers (follow-up of questionnaire responses).

Content Analysis

White and Marsh (2006) characterize the content analysis approach as a systematic method to generate findings and place them in context. This analysis was undertaken on the following documents (discussed earlier) to identify inter-related issues in the educational framework for developing the EFT book:

1. National Education Policy (2000)
2. National Education Policy (2010)
3. The English Curriculum for classes 11–12 (2012)

4. Guidelines for Textbook writers for EFT for classes 11–12 (2012)
5. *English for Today: Classes XI and XII* (Islam & Kabir, 2015).

The textbook content analysis attempted to ascertain the theoretical principles that informed the writers' design of the texts, exercises and activities, and to determine to what extent the instructional materials were informative, instructional, experiential, eliciting, or exploratory as advocated by Tomlinson (2012).

Questionnaires

Open-ended questionnaires were administered to two sets of respondents: EFT writers ($n = 6$) and higher secondary English teachers ($n = 70$). The respondents were selected through purposive sampling technique. Due to the COVID-19 situation, questionnaires were administered online and actually proved advantageous as teachers based in 16 districts (out of total 64) under four Education Boards (out of total nine) were reached. Respondents were 33% females, 67% males, aged from 30 to 55 years with teaching experience from 3 to 27 years. The colleges/schools are 3% government, 97% private (not surprising as around 90% educational institutes are privately run), have been operational for 14–61 years. Class size ranges from 80 to 145. English classes on EFT book are held thrice weekly and class duration is 40–45 min.

Follow-Up, Semi-structured Interviews

Follow-up interviews were conducted via android phones with selected respondents ($n = 20$) based on their questionnaire responses, in order to enable me to get more in-depth viewpoints.

Constraints were posed by the long-drawn COVID-19 situation that prevented me from taking FGD interviews of students and on-site classroom observation. Despite these limitations, the above multimodal approach of combining a variety of methods and techniques provides enough evidence of triangulation to ensure the reliability and validity of the data.

Data Analysis

In line with the qualitative research tradition, the data obtained via the above methods were analyzed by picking out emergent themes as advocated by Denzin and Lincoln (2018).

Findings

Guided by the four research questions (stated in the introduction section), I collected the data from document content analysis, questionnaires, and follow-up interviews. The findings are discussed below.

The Extent of the Match Between 2012 Curriculum Objectives and the Design of the EFT Book

The 2012 curriculum clearly laid out the objectives, the theoretical approach to be followed (based on cognitive psychology, SLA insights, and social domains), themes to be represented, and the guidelines for developing the materials through a communicative approach. NCTB sets up a team of two in-house coordinators, two academically reputed editors, and six writers from academia, who developed the units, lessons, tasks, and activities of the 205-page book and introduced it in 2015.

The curriculum prescribes all four basic language skills to be practiced in classrooms in an integrated manner and in meaningful contexts so that interactive practice in language use would go beyond the textbook and include real-life situations. Grammar is also emphasized but needed to be integrated into the materials through a communicative approach. With an eye on content and context, the curriculum also suggested themes/topics for providing suitable contexts for language practice.

The questionnaire survey completed by one editor, and the writers of the EFT book show that most of them were knowledgeable about the content and the approach although two writers admitted they had been given certain chapters to complete with a general guideline and they followed that. Asked if they had previous experience of writing English textbooks, three of them stated that they had not and did not feel experience was necessary. Three of the writers who have an applied linguistics and ELT background showed a deeper knowledge of their roles and the expectations of the textbook project.

The content analysis of the textbook shows there is alignment in the following aspects:

1. **Themes and topics:** They relate to the necessity of reflecting social and moral values and the spirit of the Liberation War as laid out in the 2012 English curriculum document and are sensitive to issues of gender, culture, race, religion, ethnicity, and the environment. So, themes and topics include human contributions to historical developments, human rights and relationships, adolescence, food and food adulteration, traffic education, environment, nature and climate change, ways to higher education, contributions of scientific endeavors, women and girl empowerment, the digital world, peace and conflict, as well as literature, arts, music, myths, dreams, and travel.
2. **Selection of texts as lesson input:** There is a wide range of text types used—from newspaper reports, journalistic narratives, political speeches, travelogues,

to literary pieces, short stories, poems, irony, satire. They may be considered interesting and often educative.

3. **Organization and illustrations:** The book is organized into topical units and thematically subsumed lessons. It also has a range of colorful illustrations, charts, photos, maps, posters, mostly downloaded from the Internet. This is a welcome change from the previous EFT textbook produced in 2001 when NCTB mandated that only hand-drawn pictures by their in-house artists would be used, resulting in poorly executed black and white illustrations that were often ridiculed.
4. **Use of the Bangla language:** Although the first or native language finds no space in the curriculum (not surprising as few curriculum guidelines for teaching EFL/ESL barely mentions the first language), the writers promote the Bangla language by using translated texts and local words like *hoar*, *beel*, and *jolmahal* (p. 98). In a few lessons, learners are asked to say certain concepts in Bangla. This is commendable as this encourages translanguaging and bilingualism.

The Theoretical Approach of the Book

According to the curriculum dictates and the writers' claims, the theoretical framework of the EFT book is built on a communicative approach with an emphasis on meaningful combination of the four skills of speaking, listening, reading, and writing within a cognitive, affective, and psychomotor orientation appropriate to the age and level of students. The findings reveal some mismatches to the communicative approach. This is discussed in the next section.

The Design and Arrangement of Content and Learning Activities

The content analysis and questionnaire/interview data revealed the following:

Complexity of Language Used in EFT

There is no grading of texts or tasks from easy to difficult—perhaps that may be due to the fact that most of the texts are authentic. There are also language style variations, some from literary pieces from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, e.g. Unit 15, lesson 4: “The Wonders of Vilayet.” 78% of questionnaire respondents felt the language is of a very advanced level, often beyond the capacity of the teachers themselves. All 20 teachers interviewed emphasized this factor—the language used was complex and difficult.

Length of Input Texts

The curriculum had talked of ‘short’ texts. However, most texts are considerably lengthy. They vary from 1800+ words to 800 words; even the short pieces like poems are around 300–400 words. Seeing the duration of the English class is only 40–45 min long; teachers reported it was very difficult to complete the lessons even over three class periods. One teacher commented, “*It is a cut and paste book.*”

Instructional Activities (Tasks and Exercises)

Based on Tomlinson (2021), the instructional activities in the EFT book were evaluated according to the following criteria:

1. Informative—learners are helped to note relevant features of the language,
2. Instructional—learners are engaged in practicing the language,
3. Experiential—learners use language by being directly involved in activities,
4. Eliciting—learners are encouraged to produce language individually or with peer support,
5. Exploratory—learners inductively discover language forms by meaningful engagement.

Content analysis shows most of the tasks are of the first two types, while there are some experiential and eliciting exercises, but no exploratory tasks are found. Although exploratory exercise of downloading information from the Internet is included, there is no attempt to involve learners to make discoveries *about* the language. Even though the curriculum talks of communicative grammar, there are no discovery tasks that enable learners to discover patterns and systems of language use.

Tomlinson (2011) emphasizes the specific learning of declarative and procedural knowledge as it enables learners to notice the relevant elements of language structures. This however is absent. Most are comprehension tasks, and there are numerous vocabulary exercises, some antonyms and synonym exercises and matching and re-ordering. Although speaking tasks are set up in the warm-up exercises, listening tasks are not given, but then, it may be argued any speaking subsumes listening as a co-related activity.

Warm-up Activities

A warm-up is a short activity done at the beginning of the class that helps get students in a learning frame of mind. Generally, a warm-up should last about 5 min. Yet, EFT has warm-up activities (often 3 in a row), not only discussing complex issues but also involving extensive writing that would take the entire class time. Sometimes, out-of-class activities are included where students are asked to survey a location or talk to their elders or other people.

Examples of inappropriate warm-ups are frequent. For example:

1. “In a group, talk about the child labor situation in Bangladesh? How do employers treat child laborers? What human rights do the employers violate? Write a page on the plight of street children in our cities” (p. 90).
2. “Have you ever travelled by boat, launch, or steamer along a river? Write down your experience in 500–600 words” (p. 184).
3. “What significant changes have taken place in Bengal (today’s Bangladesh) in the field of language and culture since the nineteenth century?” (p. 203).

Prevalent Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Practices

The 70 higher secondary school teachers who responded to the questionnaires including the 20 who gave follow-up interviews gave almost similar responses to the queries.

73% teachers stated in-class teaching of the book is confined to the teacher reading the text in the lesson and translating it into Bangla. Most exercises are skipped. The texts are considered important because they are included in the final examination. But strangely enough, the text is reprinted in the question paper along with the test item (a summary, a flowchart, or theme-writing).

100% teachers reported there was a very strong examination orientation among institutional authorities, teachers, learners, parents, and in society as the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examination at the end of class 12, is considered a very high-stake national test. As examinations have a strong backwash effect on the system (see Ali, Hamid & Hardy, 2020; Das, Shaheen, Shrestha, Rahman & Khan, 2014; Rahman & Khan, 2021), teachers teach to the test, and learners learn for the test. EFT classes instead of being a place for developing learners’ English language skills become the preparation and practice ground for examinations.

87% teachers believe that the Notebook and Guidebook culture nullifies the use of the EFT book. There is practically a long established, high production ‘industry’ that supplies the country with an array of highly popular guidebooks. Teachers claim many students do not own the textbook book but buy only guidebooks because past HSC test questions are contained in them, including handy answers, so students usually just memorize them. Most teachers named three particular guidebooks as highly popular. One experienced teacher said, “A *guide book is actually a complete guide to pass in HSC.*” 48% teachers reported that many teachers also teach from the guidebooks since past question papers are included here.

The private tuition culture that attracts students either within the institution or by interventionist entrepreneurs (Hamid, Sussex, & Khan, 2009; Rahman & Khan, 2021) is extremely popular. Teachers reported almost 79% students attend private coaching classes. Here, students are provided with test preparation materials and test practices. Memorization is part of the learning culture. Private tuition, viewed as an imperative by learners, notwithstanding their financial capacity, is accepted in the family culture and is widely endorsed in society.

Analysis

In light of the findings discussed in the previous section, the final research question of this study regarding the relevance of the EFT book to the teaching–learning context although already evident in the teachers’ responses is summarized here. The study has served to problematize the role of the textbook in the English language education space. It has attempted to defamiliarize the common-sense assumption that a textbook is something that is used in a class by a teacher and learners in order that learning will take place, and some benefits will thus be gained. In fact, the study findings have actually challenged the claim that the EFT book is being used for the purpose for which it was designed.

It is relevant here to point out that earlier studies on the EFT book are confined to critiquing the content and exercises in the book and exposing teachers’ dissatisfaction with the CLT approach (see Ali, 2014; Muhsin, 2016; Roshid, Haider, & Begum, 2018). They have not questioned the extent to which book *was actually being used* in the classroom as the current study has done.

The findings have pointed to three significant practices that negatively impact the use of the EFT book as a learning resource.

The Strong Exam Orientation

Prevalent among education management authorities, teachers, learners, parents, and the community at large, this mindset creates a severe negative backwash effect on the system and transforms the EFT classes from facilitating the development of English language skills into a mass preparation and practice ground for the HSC examinations.

The Notebook and Guidebook Culture

This phenomenon completely undermines the use of the EFT book. As these books contain past test questions with prepared answers, students regularly memorize them and do not bother to consult the textbook. In fact, teachers reported many students do not even own the textbook.

The Assessment System

Assessment in the final HSC examination is set out for both Paper 1 (based on the EFT book) and Paper 2 (grammar and composition) with details of marks distribution.

Listening and speaking skills are planned to be assessed on a continuing basis to be added to the learners' final grade, but this has not yet been introduced and remains a contentious concern (Roshid et al., 2018).

The fundamental factor, however, is the critical reality that the HSC English assessment system is not aligned with the changes introduced in the curriculum (Das et al., 2014; Rahman & Khan, 2021). There is evidence that there is an absence of *assessment literacy* (Taylor, 2009) among teachers, test-setters, and scorers. This specific literacy is essential as it would allow test designers and users to be mindful of faulty practices that are harmful to learning. Studies have shown how inadequate and conservative question setting “ensure the perpetuation of problematic test design and practices” (Ali et al., 2020, p. 533).

The above point to the fact that the current EFT book is not actually relevant to the teaching–learning context for which it has been designed.

Conclusion

This analysis of the higher secondary English textbook developed within the parameters of a prescriptive national curriculum brings out the challenges of developing valid English language teaching materials that could accommodate both the declared objectives of the curriculum and negotiate encounters with varied forces at play. The study shows that materials development is not an isolated exercise but needs to be considered within a broader context of a network of entangled systems that impinge on the entire education system. These praxes, shaped by micro-political, administrative, and socio-cultural practices and rituals create a complex reality that are produced and re-produced in the educational setting, creating challenges that the materials development enterprise and its classroom usage encounter.

These entangled practices may be likened to what Pennycook (2020) refers to as *entangled Englishes* within different ideologies in specific societies. Spolsky (2021) has pointed out that education within a national policy is compounded by the many different policies (and socially approved practices) with which a national government must compete. Looking forward, a critical re-calibration of these practices needs to be worked out, by policymakers, stakeholders, and concerned actors through negotiating meaningful understanding and efforts. Perhaps such an approach might provide some opportunities to deal with this complex state of affairs. In so doing, Bangladesh could be working toward SDG 4—ensuring inclusive and quality education for all and promoting lifelong learning.

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Chapter 11

Rhizomatic Literacy Through Graphic Novels



Sonia Sharmin

Abstract Graphic novels have powerful language that can engage students by showing reality through multimodal arts and illustrations that a monolithic text may not do. Drawing on the post-structural theory of Deleuze and Guattari (1987), this chapter provides ideas on using graphic novels in class and highlights the importance of rhizomatic literacy for adolescent learners with a special focus on multilingual students and English Learners (ELs). Graphic novels can cultivate multiliteracy. Using two non-fiction novels, *The Harlem Hellfighters* (Brooks, 2014) and *Darkroom: A Memoir in Black and White* (Weaver, 2012), this chapter shows how such multimodal texts can be used effectively for teaching history and culture as well as language to young learners in diverse contexts. Teachers may encourage students to read these books and write about their personal lives and experiences. It has been argued that these activities will enable students to positively construct their identities while enhancing their self-image and self-esteem in multicultural and multilingual societies.

Keywords Graphic novels · Multiliteracy · Multilingualism

Introduction

I don't remember when exactly I read my first comic book, but I do remember exactly how liberated and subversive I felt as a result. (Edward W. Said, 2001)

Building on Said's quote, it can be said that a comic book or a graphic novel offers liberating feelings to most of the readers because of its visual as well as textual way of representation. Adolescents may benefit from practices that help them in becoming freethinkers. Young learners may be served well by educational practices involving the use of graphic novels. In order to support the emotional needs and nurture the intellectual interest of the students in the era of multiculturalism and multilingualism, teachers need to celebrate students' culture and diversity in multiple ways.

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In school curriculum, graphic novels can cultivate multiliteracy. However, graphic novels do not have its proper place in the syllabi because of deeply rooted curriculum. Graphic novels are not a marginalized form of art; rather, they can be a great source of literacy for the struggling English Learners (ELs). Teachers can use resources that will be familiar to the students. The goal of instruction may be to foster strong literacy abilities and critical thinking. Graphic novels as rhizomatic literacy may fill the need of the learners in that regard. Rhizomatic literacy deals with instruction and curriculum that does not follow the traditional approach in the curriculum. Instead of focusing on a hierarchical linear education curriculum, it sheds light on practices that are entangled in students' lives. This is essential in today's world where students are engaged in online practices where they are exposed to visual literacies. Comics and graphic novels that are full of images can enhance the English learning abilities of students. Graphic novels, such as *The Harlem Hellfighters* and *Dark Room: Memoir in Black and White* can cultivate multiple-literacy.

Graphic novels are important for immigrant students as the immigrant stories in graphic novels resonated with their experience (Boatright, 2010). Journals and graphic stories, with their narratives and drawings, are a great way to nurture the identity of immigrant students and ELs. Through graphic journeys, the students are engaged more in classroom activities that will make their learning process more effective. Identity and multiculturalism are other issues, which can be addressed through graphic journeys. Danzak (2011) focused on middle school students' graphic technique of telling stories. They tell stories of immigrant families through graphic novels. Graphic novels also help ELs to learn academic themes in language arts as Hecke (2011) wrote, "One of the great advantages of graphic novels is that their visual design and narrative construction do not merely provide struggling readers with mental imagery but also present them with extended storylines, character constellations, and moral themes" (p. 654). Hecke's (2011) findings of the reading project on graphic novels suggest that "graphic novels can further the achievement of central objectives in EFL and American Studies classes" (p. 665). He found that graphic novels increase intercultural competence along with linguistic and literary skills. Therefore, graphic novels can be used more often in a language-learning classroom. Graphic novels as rhizomatic literacy can serve ELs, fostering diversity in an affirmative approach to teaching multiple literacies and nurturing multiple identities.

Theoretical Framework

Using Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) theory of rhizome, this chapter shows how the two graphic novels can be an effective method to teach literacy to adolescent English learners in specific contexts: Bangladesh where the author of the chapter grew up, and the USA where she currently resides. A rhizome keeps on growing without any limitations that may be similar to another rhizome or may not be similar at all. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) think that the rhizome itself adopts very diverse forms. Every rhizome is multiplied, which has lines of flight that produce other branches.

If we consider a graphic novel like a rhizome, it can produce different branches of knowledge. Knowledge should not be like an arboreal tree or a vertical root, which goes in one direction, not producing multiplicities. Knowledge that is like a vertical root does not produce multiplicities of ideas. As Deleuze and Guattari (1987), French post-structural theorists, observe:

roots are static, unchanging, and lead to an arboreal structure, the hierarchy of the tree with its vertical trunk and clearly articulated branches. Yet language arts education has experienced enormous growth and change with the advent of multimodalities in new media, digital literacies, and technologies, as well as with the grafting of theories about the relations among reader, text, context, and activity (cited in Hagood, 2009, p. 39).

They also state that the rhizome is a map that is always “detachable,” “connectable,” “reversible,” and “modifiable”. It has “multiple entryways and exits” (p. 21) with its own lines of flight in different directions. The rhizome is like a map without tracing, and there are different ways to enter inside or go outside. These scholars reject fixation because whenever knowledge is stagnant, it stops being beneficial and fruitful. Bulbs, tubers, and tendrils grow because they indicate there is life in a rhizome, and they are an important part of a rhizome. All bulbs, tubers, and tendrils coming out of teaching activities from graphic novels are very important, for they all have their significance. By bulbs, tubers, and tendrils, I mean different branches of knowledge from other knowledge produced before. All these small parts of the rhizome matter.

A rhizome will not create a dichotomy because it does not have a deep-rooted structure. Standardized tests are an example of a vertical way of education as it is designed to find the one correct answer. One is correct and others are wrong. This practice creates binaries resulting in memorization of the content for the sake of passing the test. Therefore, adolescents may not have to think in a multimodal way while preparing for standardized tests. On the other hand, activities, contexts, and texts might offer multitudes of techniques that are rhizomatic. Graphic novels being a multimodal art form offer that possibility.

A rhizome, as Deleuze and Guattari (1987) point out, “ceaselessly establishes connections between semiotic chains, organizations of power, and circumstances relative to the arts, sciences, and social struggles” (p. 7). My intention in this chapter is to demonstrate how graphic novels can produce multiplicities conducive to adolescent ELs. Graphic novels are not the dominant method of storytelling; however, readers can connect with a graphic novel for its readability. Using graphic novels in classrooms for teaching myriad skills is a rhizomatic practice. The theory of rhizome inspires me to think differently, moving away from the traditional and fixed techniques of teaching. Therefore, I believe graphic novels can foster rhizomatic literacy in ELs. This rhizomatic literacy is multiliteracy because it deals with myriad aspects of literacy, such as storytelling, drawing, teaching history, and so on, and all these interesting activities will be engaging for the ELs.

Rhizomatic literacy is necessary for young learners in different contexts. Graphic novels like *Darkroom* and *The Harlem Hellfighters* may be used to support second language learners’ creativity in speaking, writing, and thought as well. Such texts can

facilitate teaching various lessons to focus on issues such as racism and stereotyping of immigrant communities in the US. English learners in Bangladesh can learn about challenges that cultural diversity entails.

The next section discusses how graphic novels can be harnessed to cultivate multiliteracies among learners in diverse contexts.

Using Graphic Novels in the Classroom

Graphic narratives can show what can be said and what can be shown. It is imperative in today's world that we think more critically about this genre. Graphic novels are one form of comics, and comics are not a lowbrow art in this day and age. As stated by Smetana, Odelson, Burns, and Grisham (2009), "Graphic novels usually refer to comics with lengthy and complex storylines similar to those of novels, and they are often aimed at mature audiences" (p. 229). Learners find graphic novels interesting for myriad things can be learned in rhizomatic ways.

Chute (2008) emphasizes the importance of comics as literature because she thought that comics are a very powerful way of thinking critically. Readers can make meaning from comics in two ways: seeing the images and reading the captions. Chute (2008) also suggests that comics are capable of scaffolding their narrative both through visual and verbal modes. Giving a historical background of comics, she suggested that comics help illustrate historical and personal expressions to their readers. As there is a tendency to think of some forms of storytelling as dominant and other forms as marginalized, graphic novels are currently seen as less important than the traditional forms of telling stories. However, graphic novels are unconventional ways of telling stories, for it is a combination of both visual and verbal texts.

Graphic novels should be taught in the classroom not only for their literary value but also for many other benefits. Students will learn where to use quotation marks when they have to write a dialogue in the dialogue balloon. It can also be used for outlining a story. When the learners see panels and pictures, they understand how that particular picture creates meaning and this is important for learning how to prepare an outline for an essay. The same image can create different meanings to different readers, as the pictures are multimodal, full of boxes, texts, colors, gutters, and so on. The imageries in a graphic novel are more persuading and powerful than the imageries only through texts so much so that it can motivate reluctant readers to a great extent (Bakis, 2012). Good storytelling happens in multiplicities of ways in a graphic novel.

The picture of torture, trauma, happiness, or any other emotion can be told briefly through visual images and dialogues. For example, Chute (2008) suggests that in works by Spiegelman and Sacco, the portrayal of torture and trauma is very productive through graphic novels. She also brings Said's opinion about his book *After the Last Sky: Palestinian Lives* where Said stated that we need "unconventional, hybrid and fragmentary forms of expression" (cited in Chute, 2008) to represent how people and war should be portrayed differently. Graphic novels represent the suffering and

trauma of people in unconventional ways. It is a hybrid as well as a fragmentary form of storytelling. The rhizomatic way is fragmentary as it believes in rupture when necessary. By rupture, I mean something that is not structured all the time and changes when necessary. If teachers need to supplement the learning process with fragmentary ideas with pictures, graphic novels can be a line of flight from the structured system.

Hagood (2004) observes rhizomatic relationships among adolescents, popular culture, and identity. She suggests that popular culture can teach learners. She states that the mainstream tendency is to limit the scope of popular culture by not associating it with images and pictures; she goes on to further emphasize that graphic novels are branches of popular culture. Also, Hagood (2009) describes the characteristics of rhizome and suggested rhizomatic cartography. Rhizomatic cartography is not just a metaphor; rather, it is a real practice in representing systems differently; adolescent learners often use popular culture to form their identity, just as they are oftentimes pushed against the identities they form from their popular culture interests (Hagood, 2004). Following age-old traditional practices for teaching adolescent learners might not always be a good practice as we are moving towards the future. Bringing new practices into the classroom may add different flavors to ELs' learning experiences.

Rhizome art is necessary for learners of this century to be creative for a variety of purposes, and language arts can no longer be a cognitive skill for the learners (Hagood, 2009). Theories and practices of language arts do not need to follow a particular tradition. In this age of new media and technology, we need a myriad of modalities in language arts education. From a multimodal perspective, we can look at graphic novels as an alternative way to literacy.

Kamberelis (2004) notes that a rhizomatic pack of multiplicities will remove hierarchical authority through rupture and then it will re-territorialize things. He also maintains that changes happen because of rhizomatic literacy. He cites examples of slave narratives and church practices to show how rhizomatic literacy gave birth to the thought of freedom among the slaves. His article suggests breaking traditional ideas, like gender roles, high culture, heterosexuality, and so on, to get out of constructed ideas to bring real changes. Similarly, this chapter shows how rhizomatic practice removes authority through the rupture. Without rupture, there will be no change in the traditional practices.

Teaching Multiliteracy Through Graphic Novels

Graphic novels can be used in a myriad of ways to teach multiple-literacy to second language (L2) learners in different contexts. As Kress (2003) writes, "the world told is a different world to the world shown" (p. 1). Hagood (2009) also points out, "Kress shows relational shifts that have pushed the dominance of the mode of image over the medium of writing and the mode of screen over the medium of a book" (p. 40). We live in a culture where simple writing cannot produce the best result. While it is

true that writing is necessary, in this age of multimodality, the practice of different visual mediums for language teaching is very important.

Consuming, constructing, and producing identities from a graphic novel from the characters will help L2 learners learn the language better. Reading or writing from a graphic novel encourages students to read, write, draw, and make fun with the same text. Moreover, reading for pleasure is very important for the learners and writers because if they do not read it for pleasure, it will become hard for them to learn through one-dimensional sources, which may not be so interesting and multimodal as graphic novels.

In the rest of the chapter, I will show how the two graphic novels: *The Harlem Hellfighters* and *Darkroom: A Memoir in Black and White* may be used in the classroom to develop rhizomatic literacy among the learners in different contexts such as the US and Bangladesh.

The Harlem Hellfighters

The Harlem Hellfighters is brilliant in its illustration of the African American soldiers' pain. While this story does not take on an immigrant experience, English language students can relate to the 'othering' felt by African American soldiers in World War I. This novel presents a long-forgotten history of the United States. The novel portrays scenes from the First World War and the illustrations depict horrible and fragmentary images. The pain and the suffering of the soldiers in the book become the primary aspect of the novel. For example, one scene in the book illustrates how a white group of soldiers attacked a black soldier and then the black soldier said that only colored people are not allowed to resist. He was saved by a group of white soldiers; however, he does not like it because for him it is a question of self-respect. Also, it demonstrates that the white could be the savior but the black could not. Overall, the novel is a powerful depiction of the marginalization of the African American soldiers.

Darkroom: A Memoir in Black and White

Darkroom: A Memoir in Black and White portrays the cultural identity of L. Q. Weaver in the US as an Argentine immigrant. The story of the book is about an immigrant family who comes and faces problems in the South in the US. The main character Lila is reluctant to reveal her identity in a setting where her family fits on neither white nor black background. This is a common feeling of most of the immigrant children in this country. Also, the story of the novel reiterates the emphasis on immigrants since their stories are also immigrant stories. The young protagonist tries to cope with discrimination, struggles to find a place within movements for racial

justice, and gradually comes to terms with her identity as a Spanish-speaking immigrant. This graphic novel portrays Lila's assimilation into white American culture; as a result, she also questions herself about the civil rights struggles and her identity. The graphic representations of racial and cultural identity through the novel are a significant part for the learners who struggle with culture and identity.

Creating Stories Through Graphic Novels

The multiple stories from the two novels can be used in the classroom to make the students aware of different stories. Teachers can also ask them to write their personal stories related to any experience they have gone through. These two non-fiction graphic novels can inspire young learners to a great extent. A story taken from a page of these graphic novels can be very effective for making other stories. Second language learners will have ideas visually from the novel, and it is easier for them to write stories when the visual is in front of them. The learners can write down the story from the panels of a graphic novel. Some students can draw pictures, and others can write their own stories based on the drawings.

The book, *The Harlem Hellfighters*, does not tell the story of only the US versus other countries in the First World War. It tells the stories and conflicts of the soldiers in the US. It has stories inside stories, and that creates the flight from the main storylines. The way it ends does not suggest any ending; rather, it suggests a new beginning for the people of color. The pictures of the book show the pain of the character. Also, the caption can give a new meaning, and without caption, photos create different meanings.

Teaching History

The Harlem Hellfighters presents a long-forgotten history of the US. The novel portrays scenes from the First World War in horrible illustrations and fragmentary images. The pain and the suffering of the soldiers become the primary aspect of the novel. What is striking is that at the end of the novel, a black soldier predicts that this Great War is not about winning because there will be a war of racism soon. Therefore, this novel teaches that the Great War was not the end of all wars; rather, it was the beginning of another war of 'Racism' which is still going on in the US. The question is what this generation can do to end that war and how the new generation can bring change in terms of the attitude of 'the White' to the 'the Black'. The pictorial descriptions may easily induce the thought in the minds of the learners.

The autobiographical non-fiction *Darkroom* can be used in teaching substantial aspects of the language and history of the US. On page 28 of *Darkroom*, Weaver shows her history as a young girl through photo negatives. Using closures the writer then shows how each panel inside the picture negative gives meaning. The photo

negative tells the history of her life in a fragmented way. It tells the history of her life beginning with leaving Argentina, entering an unknown world, looking for a place that she can call home, to who she would become among different races. What is more powerful is the depiction of all these stories in black, white, and gray. The color effect, although not in a colorful way, creates a different appeal. Her highly accessible drawings and dialogue are vivid and sharp to create the impact of a movie in class.

All these issues will induce thought among adolescent readers. When a book can address reality and history, it can create a powerful impact on readers in learning a language and a culture. And “our responsibility as educators is to provide that reference point, filling in the blanks and helping them to understand the larger historical contexts” (Decker & Castro, 2012, p. 178). Like a rhizome, educators need to grow tubers and bulbs in their teaching practices to help the learners in their learning process.

Teaching Language

The language in the novels is also very powerful. An adolescent will find the dialogue useful because they depict the emotion of the character very powerfully. As this happens with pictures, the emotion is made stronger. The picture of the American dream is made vivid in pictures on page 39 of *Darkroom* how America is represented in magazines and why people are attracted to this country. Ironically, on page 42, the writer shows how magazines have no place for the black. Therefore, magazines did not represent what the reality was.

On page 61, Weaver represents famous books like *Passage to India*, *Black Like Me*, *The Second Sex*, *Native Son*, which reflect multiculturalism. The learners can learn the names of these famous books. Weaver chooses those books deliberately. All the books here have themes of marginalization that align with the theme of her book that resonates within the immigrant population.

Also, the sound effects of the rebellion of the black create a realistic effect in *The Harlem Hellfighters*. Sound like “whack”, “crack”, “slam”, “eek” “crash” “vroom” (pp. 162–163) are very sharp in delineating the real picture. As these sounds are shown with catch pictures, it is easy for L2 learners to remember them.

Identity Cultivation

The expression of the students’ narratives in the form of graphic narratives will allow the students to have a look at their identity in the form of pictures. Both the written texts and the pictures tell them the meaning of their journey. In *Darkroom*, Weaver showed the ideal picture of America in a foreigner’s mind. However, when people immigrate, they become victims of different racial problems. When students read

this text, they can describe their ideas about America and how it is in their lives. They may contradict—they may agree—they may even gain the ability to argue or negotiate, but this will also offer them an opportunity to learn language skills from both textual and visual forms.

Both these graphic novels are sources of innumerable information, which can form the identities of learners. Both the novels are documents of the history of the US. When immigrant students know about this aspect of the novel, they may find similarities between their experience and the characters in the novel. Although everyone has a past, identities are never fixed. That transformation creates cultural identity. In Hall's (1996) words:

Cultural identity... is a matter of 'becoming' as well as of 'being'. It belongs to the future as much as to the past. It is not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history, and culture. Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But, like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialized past, they are subject to the continuous 'play' of history, culture, and power (p. 225).

Graphic novels, with an abundance of information, can help students form their cultural identity which is constantly changing. At the end of the two novels, we see that the characters in the novels change significantly, bringing positive changes in their life.

Graphic novels are motivational and encouraging learning tools which offer an excellent way to engage learners, especially adolescent learners in forming their identity. L2 learners who negotiate with the world constantly while learning a language, look for rhizomatic aspects in their reading materials. Students in the Bangladeshi classrooms learn from the primary textbooks which often lack multimodality. However, they will be motivated if the textbook, as well as the teaching, includes their voices. They can act out particular parts of the novels to be engaged in class. This is participatory culture which enhances students' self-importance in class. Remixing ideas from the two novels to incorporate with their own ideas will enhance motivation and increase their self-importance as learners.

In addition, graphic novels can play a significant role in L2 learners' learning process. As observed by Norton and McKinney (2011), "every time learners speak, they are negotiating and renegotiating a sense of self in relation to the larger social world, and reorganizing that relationship in multiple dimensions of their lives" (p. 73). When L2 learners speak or learn a language, they try to find their identity. They try to relate their identity in relation to the larger world, which can be very beneficial for them if they are in a positive environment to learn. Eventually, they try to negotiate that relationship between texts and their life with multiple aspects of their life. The issues of power and identity are connected with the learning process of the L2 learners. Hence, when the students find a similar story from the real life in their texts, it will remind them of their identity and will accelerate the process of L2 learning. This is a rhizomatic approach as well because this approach will arise from the context of class.

Norton and McKinney (2011) point out that language learners have complex identities and multiple desires. When the language learners speak, they not only speak

in the target language but also form identities in relation to the society. Speaking in a L2 also means investing their own identity as learners change with time and space. Norton and McKinney (2011) also discuss ‘imagined community’ for a L2 learner. Although the English language learners always do not get chances to speak with someone from the native speaker community, they create imagined communities. These “imagined communities are no less real than the ones in which learners have daily engagement and might even have a stronger impact on their identities and investments” (p. 76). The two books can be useful in this process of finding students’ identities. Expressing one’s identity through stories is a powerful way to learn English. When students find a connection between the learning environment and the home environment, they are motivated to learn.

Using Graphic Novels in the Bangladeshi Context

Graphic novels have a significant influence on immigrant communities as previously discussed in the context of the US. Considering their benefits, graphic novels can be included in the school curriculum in the Bangladesh context. In order to do so, the educational policymakers may set standards where there is a place for graphic novels and comics. The history of Bangladesh can be written in a graphic novel format. For example, we might have effective graphic novels based on the Liberation War, and autobiographies of the famous personalities of Bangladesh. Also, world classics in graphic format will be useful to represent Shakespeare and other famous writers of the world. This will not only teach history but also increase students’ English skills. The English translation of *Chacha Chaudhary* (Sharma, 2021), a popular comic book, and other popular comic strips and graphic novels may be provided to students so that they can read those for pleasure. Another important field that can be incorporated is social taboos that exist in Bangladesh regarding racism, shadeism, bullying, and class hierarchy. If those topics can be incorporated in different graphic novels, students will be aware of those social issues when they are in school. As a result, they will learn about the negative effects of all these social norms.

Finally, teachers can incorporate comics and graphic novels in their classrooms. Different groups of students can draw images with dialogues of their stories, which will bring creativity to the classroom as well. This approach will make the students aware of multiple literacy and its varying viewpoints. The following are a few teaching ideas for implementing this approach:

- (i) Teachers might want to ask the students in groups to draw pictures and make their own dialogues.
- (ii) Pictures coupled with dialogues might induce thought among the adolescents.
- (iii) Also, at the end of the semester, students can create their own graphic novels by compiling all the work. This way they will have their own story to represent. The art activities will help students as visual representation enhances the learning ability of the L2 learners.

Use of Multimodal Texts in Materials and Assessment

There are many good reasons for incorporating multimodal texts such as graphic novels into the curriculum alongside the traditional texts. Since the textbooks can be monotonous for some students (Cary, 2004), this may not create a deep impact on their minds. As they do not read the assigned academic texts carefully, they do not acquire the skills of writing in a L2. These materials cannot always help students to be creative as writers, especially when learners are engaged in a digital world. Because multimodal texts are “ubiquitous texts in young people’s everyday lives, they rightfully take their place alongside more traditional paper/print media” (Alvermann, 2011, p. 109). Incorporating illustrations in teaching materials will potentially enhance the students’ ability to express themselves orally as well as in writing. This will in turn allow students, particularly those from multilingual backgrounds, to participate in class discussions and dialogues as well as produce multimodal texts for meaning-making.

Use of images and illustrations should be part of teaching and assessment in this age as our learners tend to spend substantial amount of time using technological tools. Rhizomatic learning is not linear; it is a process where teachers have to utilize different instructional techniques so that our learners learn the best. Teaching through images will open up opportunities for learning in multiple ways. Also, the test formats can be multimodal unlike conventional tests in Bangladesh, for example, that usually comprise written texts and questions. Graphic novels and other multimodal texts will not be out of place even in an exam-centered teaching context such as Bangladesh if images are included in test questions.

Conclusion

Teaching through graphic novels, it has been argued, will be fascinating because graphic novels can be an excellent source of rhizomatic learning instead of fixed learning through textbooks that may demotivate many students. This chapter discusses ideas from two novels; however, it does not suggest using these two novels exclusively. Rhizomatic literacy will depend on the need of the context. With that, the curriculum will form a new line of flight.

This line of flight will produce multiliteracy and give birth to different activities for students. The trajectory of teaching should not be limited to teaching books only for passing tests. As Lyotard (1984) writes, “the nature of knowledge cannot survive unchanged... [as] anything in the constituted body of knowledge that is not translatable in this way will be abandoned” (p. 4). Critical educators need to think about this; otherwise, systems are going to produce dichotomy creating a negative attitude to belittle alternative approaches. It is time to implement alternative ways of education where graphic novels can be an inclusive way to teach. A graphic novel on autobiography and real stories can bring actual changes in terms of teaching.

In today's world, everyone is familiar with images and pictures. Second language learners would be highly motivated if they learn about history, identity, language, and culture through graphic novels. Graphic novels are small packages containing a myriad of ideas. This rhizomatic art can bring rhizomatic effects on its readers, unlike the traditional written textbooks. This form of art will give birth to tendrils of different thoughts. When everyone's attention is fragmented because of various social media in the age of multilingualism and multiculturalism, graphic novels can offer the opportunity to learn because they are multidimensional. Full of texts and images, they create a plethora of ideas, which a single medium cannot produce. Using graphic novels will serve the need of teaching various school subjects such as history, language, and the arts. How can comics be optional or a lowbrow art when they have so many advantages for learners? This chapter has highlighted the possibility "to produce different knowledge and produce knowledge differently" (Lather, 2013, p. 635) through the use of graphic novels.

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Part III
Educational Technology

Chapter 12

Students' Evolved Beliefs of TELL Constraints and Benefits: Learner Voices from an EAP Programme



Farhana Ahmed

Abstract Technology advancement has revolutionized society and intensified the motivation to communicate in global languages such as English, increasing the demand for language learning, technology-enhanced curriculum and flexible and/or engaging ways to learn. Students today expect teachers to use technologies in ways that align with their social and communicative practices. In understanding EAP students' expectations and use of technology-enhanced language learning (TELL), a multi-phased, grounded-theoretical exploratory case study approach was used. This research utilizes complementary data sources including two online surveys conducted at the beginning and the end of the EAP programme, class observations, individual students' digital diaries, stimulated recall interviews, and focus group interviews to further discern the factors that shaped those students' attitudes. Findings reveal that, overall, the students' attitudes towards technology use became more positive with increased exposure. Furthermore, a heightened critical awareness led to realizations about TELL benefits, the effectiveness of tools used, and the role of the teacher in tool implementation as a result of participating in the research (one of the contextual factors). Recommendations for tech-enhanced pedagogy and teacher training for successful implementation of domain-based training (Stockwell, 2015) are made. Implications and importance of systematic pedagogical training for students in TELL incorporation are further stressed.

Keywords EAP · Technology and learning English · Learner beliefs · Tech-enhanced pedagogy · CALL · Pedagogical training

Introduction

A reliance and increased use of educational technology brought about by the pandemic has led to a change in the mind frame of educators, stakeholders, and students towards increased demand for technology-enhanced pedagogies, curriculum

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design, and versatile ways to teach and learn. A paradigm shift in the theory and practice of language teaching, from a teacher-fronted classroom towards a more learner-centred pedagogy using technology-enhanced language learning (TELL), demands more active participants, “*autonomous learners*” who are “responsible and critical members of the communities in which they live” (Benson, 2011, p. 1). Students today “want to learn differently than in the past. They want ways of learning that are meaningful, ways that make them see immediately that the time they are spending on their formal education is valuable, and ways that make good use of the technology they know is their birthright” (Prensky, 2010, p. 3).

To make sense of “the intensively interactive and linguistically rich environments [being] afforded by technology” (Chapelle, 2009, p. 741), we must pay attention to what the learners’ beliefs are regarding TELL (Wiebe & Kabata, 2010) and not to only teachers’ and/or administrators’ perceptions. Reed (2017) found that “educational leaders can gain insight on how to better align pedagogical practices with learning outcomes by gaining feedback from their students” (p. 12). Upon comparing students’ and instructor attitudes and perceptions towards computer-assisted language learning (CALL) materials, specifically those used in a Japanese language programme, Wiebe and Kabata (2010) found that instructors do not always have a good understanding of their students’ use of Information Technology [IT] nor do students necessarily understand their instructors’ goals for using technology-enhanced materials in their classes. Stockwell and Hubbard found a “huge” improvement in learner engagement in their activities with a vocabulary app used for learning English in Japan when students were made aware of the “why” of using it (Stockwell, 2015). This places greater importance on the need to examine learner beliefs, especially when it comes to any research in TELL incorporation within an educational system.

In the case of English for academic purpose (EAP) courses, specifically, where a lot must be covered within a very limited timeframe, teachers resort to incorporating TELL not only for engaging, student-centred pedagogies, but also to successfully meet the demands of timely teaching practices. Kessler (2018), however, cautions, “when considering the use of existing, evolving, and new technologies, it is important to consider the extent to which they facilitate learner-centred instruction” (p. 208). This chapter reports on research that investigated technology-enhanced pedagogy in a Canadian EAP university programme from the learners’ perspective. The two research questions that animated this project are as follows:

1. Do EAP students’ expectations and attitudes regarding the use of TELL evolve through a course, and if so, how?
2. What factors, contextual and/or pedagogical, shape EAP students’ attitudes towards the use of TELL?

Methodology

This study adopted a systematic, multi-phased, qualitative case study approach using online surveys, interviews, observation, and document analysis as the primary data

Table 12.1 Tools used and activities carried out in the EAP course

Tools used	Activities done
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Google Drive (individual folders of students) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Save, exchange, and share all written work, assignments, essays, paragraphs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Google Doc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compose all written classwork and homework; teacher shared and posted all feedback to written work; peer and teacher editing done synchronously
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Google Slides 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compose all presentations and debates (in class and HW) collaboratively/individually, also shared for teacher feedback
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Google+ Community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post and share student-created videos made outside of class (3 videos per student, per term), all students were encouraged to comment on their classmate's videos
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Google+ Hangout 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All teacher–student and student–student communication; all announcements, changes in schedule, plans shared/exchanged; students contacted teacher instantly if there were any questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Google+ Map 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A quest was designed for students to find individual locations assigned and video record the journey, post on their Google+ community, and comment on each other's posts

collection method. These were supported by embedded case studies where individual students reported their technology use in EAP through digital diary (DD) posts, stimulated recall (SR) interviews, and focus group (FG) interviews.

The eight-week English language programme was designed to provide a rigorous learning experience for Canadian university-bound students who had scored IELTS 5.5 or equivalent (CLB 6) in their English language test. The course involved intensive work on academic reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills in English. Students were also expected to achieve some specific socio-cultural and sociolinguistic skills that included awareness of cross-cultural issues and awareness of different socio-academic constructions of knowledge. The minimum passing mark for this course was 65% in each of the four skills. The TELL tools used were unique to this specific EAP class as they were not required by the institution, rather chosen by their course teacher (see Table 12.1).

Teacher and Student Participants

The teacher, Pierre, had English language teaching experience at home and abroad (Japan, Korea). What set him apart though was his unique passion for developing

programmes and designing online course materials, textbooks, and curricula. His MA in Applied Linguistics and published book chapter on using web-based technologies in collaborative writing in EAP appeared to have played an important role in shaping his beliefs and practices. This was reflected in the way he integrated and exploited the various functions of the Google extensions within the course.

There were 16 students (9 male and 7 female) between 18 and 20 years of age in the class who all participated in the study. They were all brought up and educated until high school in China. A few of the students also had the experience of being educated in international high schools there with English as the medium of instruction.

Instruments and Procedure

Given this study's focus on learners evolving practices and contributing factors, documenting students' perceptions, reflections, and beliefs very closely as users of educational technology in EAP, a qualitative partly grounded analysis was used in three phases over eight weeks. This approach helped to contextualize the use of tools (see Table 12.1), identify patterns of skills developed, and understand how attitudes evolved through the course due to increased usage.

Two online students' surveys were conducted at the beginning (Phase I) and at the end (Phase III) of the study. The data for each phase was fully analysed to refine approaches and queries in the following phase (see Fig. 12.1 for details). This aspect is inspired by the grounded theory method (GTM) which "is designed to encourage the researcher's persistent interaction with their data while remaining constantly involved with their emerging analyses" and thus data collection and analysis each informing and streamlining the other (Bryant, 2014, p. 125). There was a total of three DD posts followed by three SR interviews for each of the 16 participants. The SR interviews verified and elaborated on students' recorded tool use made in their DD posts. The researcher reviewed all the transcribed survey and interview data repeatedly seeking recurring patterns, corroborating and disconfirming instances to ensure reliability (Stake, 1995). Other data sources like course syllabus, teacher interview, and class observation notes were used to interpret, analyse, and triangulate themes and findings using NVIVO 12.

Findings and Discussion

The findings are discussed according to the two research questions. They are presented and analysed noting links to other research findings where applicable.

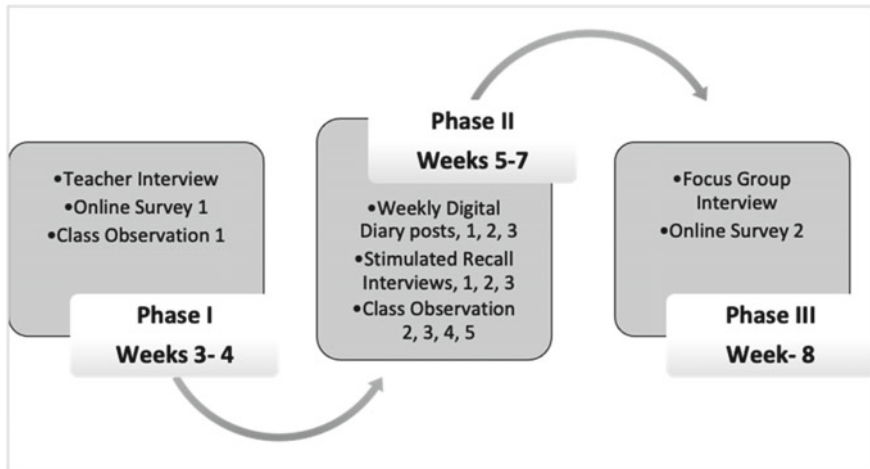


Fig. 12.1 Data collection plan and tools

Students' Evolved Attitudes

In response to research question 1, whether students' attitudes evolved through the EAP course, data analysis has revealed in the affirmative of their beliefs regarding the overall role of technology in their learning of English. In the following discussion, we will see that students' expectations and beliefs regarding TELL evolved as reflected in their past versus present experience in using technology, their perception of tech literacy and competence, and their perception of the constraints and benefits of TELL tools.

Beliefs About Technology Use in Learning English: Past versus Present

In China, “we all sit on the seat and hear what our teacher teach us from the textbook, no speaking exercises and we have to do a lot of homework and paper, we don't have any time to practice our speaking, we must memorize the words and phrases, for me, i think it is so boring!!!!” (John, DD post 1)¹

Whereas, in Canada, “it brings a lot of fun to us, and makes us feel confident, and improve [improve] our speaking skills efficiently [speaking efficiency]” (John, DD post1).

According to the above statements, students' past experience of learning English in China provided them with a “*traditional*” (Oscar, SR interview 1) teacher-fronted classroom as opposed to a more “*practical*” approach to learning in Canada (Catherine, DD post 1). Catherine believed, “We most learned grammar and remember vocabulary in China, and we are learning more practical English and join more activities about learning English [here in Canada]”. Since the class observed in this study was a mix of students coming from international versus regular

Chinese high schools where the use of technology varied between limited to no use, their attitudes towards technology use in learning English also varied according to their exposure. Teachers taught reading and grammar through the occasional use of PowerPoint to display grammar exercises at International Chinese schools, but then further explanation was done using the blackboard, not at all the way they were experiencing technology use in their EAP course. Some teachers recommended website use for IELTS listening practice and at times even recorded their own speech for repeating after towards students' pronunciation practice (Amy, DD post 1). That was the closest they were to using any kind of educational technology in China. There was a lot of translating of sentences from Chinese to English and vice versa (John, SR interview1), whereas, in their EAP course, they were asked to give their opinion in impromptu debates in class, conduct research online on a given topic before a debate, write reports, and participate in group presentations using Google tools extensively, as indicated in Table 12.1.

Beliefs about Tech-literacy and Confidence in Using Tools/Apps

It must be noted that E. M. Rogers' "Diffusion of Innovation Theory (DIT)" (as cited in Boston University School of Public Health, p. 4) had been used in both the students' online survey (Survey 1 and Survey 2) questionnaires. The theory originated in communication to explain how, over time, an idea or product gains momentum and diffuses (or spreads) through a specific population or social system. The result of this diffusion is that people, as part of a social system, adopt a new idea, behaviour, or product. Adoption means that a person does something differently than what they had previously (i.e. purchase or use a new product, acquire, and perform a new behaviour, etc.). Adoption of a new idea, behaviour, or product (i.e. "innovation") does not happen simultaneously in a social system; rather, it is a process whereby some people are more apt to adopt the innovation than others. The use of the "five established adopter categories" (p. 4) in both the surveys (see Table 12.2) will help better understand the characteristics of the individual/s in relation to their use of tech tools, their attitude towards TELL, and possible factors that impacted their belief system. It must be noted that although this DIT framework is generally used as a categorisation tool, this scale has been adopted in this research particularly as a reflective tool to gauge students' perception of themselves as tech users.

Students' tech literacy and confidence were gauged from their responses in Surveys 1 and then 2 as well as in their SR interviews and DD posts.

In the case of evolved beliefs regarding themselves as users of technology, most of the students identified themselves as either an Early Adopter or a Late Adopter (see Table 12.2 for detailed definition) in Survey 2, having gone through a course where technology use was extensive and very much encouraged in learning English. As can be seen in Fig. 12.2, from Surveys 1 to 2, the Innovators decreased from five students to two, the Early Adopters increased from four students to six, the Mass Followers decreased from six students to two, while the Late Adopters increased from one student to six students. However, at the end of the course, the Early Adopters and the Late Adopters became the highest and equal in the number of students (six students each) who believed to represent those two descriptors, and the Innovators

Table 12.2 DIT terminology and descriptions used in Surveys 1 and 2

Terminology	Description
Innovator	You like looking for new technology apps, games, software, extensions; You spend time learning how to use new technology; You like sharing new technologies with your friends
Early Adopter	You like using new technology apps, games, software, extensions that are useful; You spend time learning how to use new technology only when you think it will be useful to use
Mass Follower	You like using new technology apps, games, software, extensions only when others have used and found it to be useful; You spend time learning how to use new technology only when you have time; You like adopting the technology to benefit you only
Late Adopter	You like to start using new technology once many people have used and reported its usefulness; You like using new technology apps, games, software, extensions once its usefulness has been proven
Resister	You do not like using new technology apps, games, software, extensions just because it is the trend and everybody is using it; You think that it can be a waste of time and energy learning how to use new technology; You like to continue to do things the way you used to before the use of technology came about

and Mass Followers became equal in number (two students each). Summarizing their reasons for change revealed that the decrease in Innovators to Early Adopters was prompted by the overall realization that even though students were aware of the potential benefits of apps/tools in learning English, they were not the ones to search for more apps/tools and be innovative in trying them out. Also, some students believed that they may have overestimated their digital literacies initially in Survey 1 and became more self-critical with increased use of technologies by Survey 2; hence, the perception of being less digitally literate compared to Survey 1. The Late Adopters, on the other hand, believed that they were not as tech-savvy in finding new, useful tools and were also the ones who seemed to be facing slight challenges or still needed help in continuing to perform activities using the tech tools in their current course. In other words, these Late Adopters did not feel that they were as autonomous in technology use as the Innovators or Early Adopters, “[b]ecause computer literacy is not a core or even an elective course” (p. 44) and therefore not considered an important subject in China (Zhang, 2011).

The FG interview revealed that on the first day of class students were feeling nervous (Wesley), embarrassed at not having a laptop (Jake), surprised at being told how they would be using technology (Jacey, Joanne), afraid of not being able to adapt to this course (Eric), as well as perceiving the course to be very difficult (Catherine, Zara, Walter, and Oscar). However, having undergone TELL experience, on the last day they expressed feeling confident with the increased use of technology (Naomi, John, Tracey, Wesley, and Victor), feeling happy (Wesley), and good (Jacey, Jake, and Kacey) and reported having learned a lot (Catherine). Bueno-Alastuey and Lopez Perez's (2014) study also found that students with increased use of technology in their courses realized the true potentials of its perceived usefulness. Zhang (2011) found

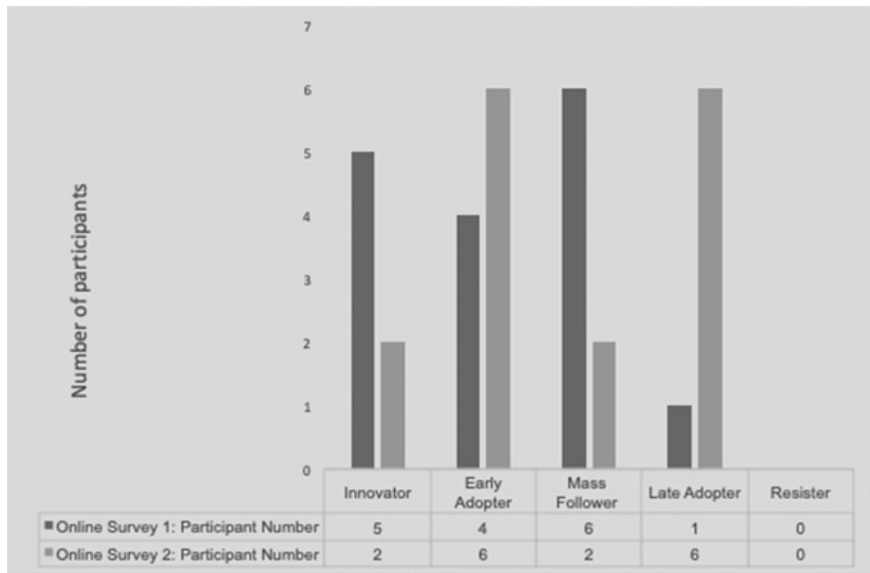


Fig. 12.2 Survey of students’ tech literacy. A comparison showing students’ self-selection of technological descriptors from online Surveys 1–2. The numbers vertically represent the number of student participants who chose a particular descriptor. The darker shaded bars depict results from online Survey 1, while the lighter shaded bars depict results from online Survey 2

a correlation between students’ usage of computers to their confidence in CALL; in other words, students who used computers at least once a week were more positive towards CALL use than those who never used computers. Overall, in this study, students’ beliefs towards technology use became more positive from the beginning to the end of the course with increased exposure, use, and competence.

In the case of confidence in tool use, there was a qualified increase of confidence and understanding of the benefits of educational technology with continued use and exposure from Surveys 1 to 2. This was reflected in the Likert scale choices students made to certain statements related to technology use in learning English. For example, in ranking their level of confidence in technology use, in Survey 1, 38% of the students ranked themselves as being 50–80% confident in using Google+ Hangout, whereas 50% of the students ranked themselves as 50–80% confident in Survey 2. In using Google Drive, 38% of the students ranked their confidence level between 80 and 100% in Survey 1, whereas, in Survey 2, it increased by 44%. Students mentioned that they had never used the G suite tools, as Amy informed, “*I just know about the internet google.com...we didn’t use Google before*” (SR interview 1). Therefore, this increase in confidence within 8 weeks’ time frame is significant given their limited to no prior experience with educational technology.

Beliefs about Constraints and Benefits of Using Technology

Students' overall beliefs regarding the benefits and constraints of using tech tools in learning English evolved greatly from the time that they started the course to their last day of classes. We have seen that students' beliefs rooted within their experience of learning English in China evolved significantly having undergone the experience in the Canadian context and that they learned to appreciate and adopt some twenty-first-century skills, digital literacies, teamwork, and developing online community/online interaction—in learning English (Dede, 2010).

Past Experience = Constraints versus Present Experience = Benefits

At the beginning of the EAP programme, some of the students considered tech use to be a waste of time, damaging to the eyesight, distracting, making learners lazy, and typing on the laptop or personal computers as difficult. Students like Jake, Walter, Oscar, and Joanne who were initially apprehensive about the use of technology in learning English changed their minds. For example, Jake, who mentioned in Survey 1 because of his disinterest in using technology at the beginning of the course, was regarded as a “troublemaker” in class by his teacher (FG interview) and describes his experience on the last day of class as “*Ya, I feel good, because, I improve my many kinds of English language skills in [EAP] program and I think I'm able to adapt [future studies] program better*” (FG interview). Even the most reluctant of all technology users, Walter who said, “*I think just use traditional way...[b]ecause technology, they are distracting...I prefer [the use of] blackboard [to computers]*” (SR interview 1), agreed at the end of the course that a boring lesson can become interesting, enjoyable, and comprehensible through the mere use of, for example, videos. With course progression, they started to see the value of technology in promoting collaborative work, getting instant, more frequent feedback from both peers and teachers, more opportunities for practice and research on their own outside of the classroom (see Fig. 12.3). Aubrey (2014) similarly reported students' reacting very positively towards features like the instant feedback option, working collaboratively as time-saving, quick, and efficient for writing on Google Docs.

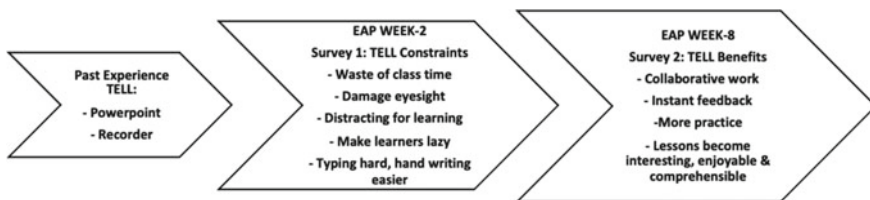


Fig. 12.3 Students' belief of TELL constraints evolved into beliefs of TELL benefits through use of technology in EAP course

Factors that Shaped Students' Beliefs

In response to research question 2, data analyses have revealed that two categories of factors seemed to have influenced changes and nuances in students' beliefs towards technology use in learning English. The contextual factors were the role of the environment and participation in the research that students described as quite impactful on their belief systems. The pedagogical factors highlight the role of the teacher, his attitude in teaching English, and in the effectiveness and usefulness of the technological tools used.

Contextual Factors

The contextual factors, the environment, and the research study shaped students' beliefs towards the use of technology over time. The role of the environment came about when students were asked to rank environment, technology, and an individual's attitude in order of importance in learning English, 1 being the most important and 3 the least important.

Ranking Environment, Technology, and Individual's Attitude

In phase II of the study, students revealed in their DD post 3 that the Canadian environment outside of class forced them to practice speaking and listening and that practice helped a lot in developing their English language skills as opposed to the situation in China (Catherine, John, Eric, Oscar, SR interview 3). According to Amy, *"The most important part is the English environment around you. And the attitude that you're toward English it's important. And I think the technology tools is kind of help you... It's kind of a tool to help you to support you to...your learning"* (SR interview 3). Interestingly, the classroom environment became part of the pedagogical factor (the role of their teacher), as Pierre designed that environment with educational technologies. By a person's attitude, they meant, whether a person agreed to work hard, make use of all the resources available to them. As Oscar put it, *"if you don't want to learn, so technology even cannot help you"* (Oscar, SR interview 3). Finally, the technological tools they used in improving and developing their English skills were ranked third as these were believed to provide additional support to the environment and the learners' willingness to learn.

However, in the FG interview when this same question was asked, students spoke of the attitude of a person as being a determining factor in the outcome of language development and that was identified as the most important factor. After attitude, the environment was seen as important because they believed that if a non-English-speaking person is put into an English-speaking environment, s/he will surely learn the language (Tracey), and finally, the tools were seen as providing support and help in language learning (Kacey, Victor, Wesley, Jacey, Jake, and Ethan).

If you really want to learn it, whatever the app or the things you use, you will learn it. So the app is just a tool to help you. Yeah, like as I said, it's just helping you, but if you want to

grasp English, it just depends on your attitude. Like if you want to really learn it, you have to just work hard (Walter, SR interview 3).

Another student Joanne believed that her shy attitude towards speaking hindered her development of fluency despite the Canadian environment and tech support received. As a result, she believed that her speaking skills did not improve as much compared to her peers. Thus overall, the support and facilities of the Canadian environment and technology were more impactful on an individual's attitude than their Chinese context of learning English.

Participating in the Research Study

I didn't think about that [benefits of using technological tools], I just used those technologies to finish my lesson and I didn't recognize that what is technology do for me. But when I do the interview or the post, when I think about that, I think yes, it's really helpful for me... I think there must have more technology tools that can really help me to organize my life, or help me to either to finish my work, and it let me more focus on those kind of technology tools (Amy, SR interview 3).

When you [the researcher] say it, I have to recall my experience and recall the strategy I used. It's really helping me to think which one is better and which one is not. So it's help me to kind of review. Like it made me to realize I have a source of technologies to use. I have many source of it, so like when I have problems, I can use technologies instead of just thinking (Walter, SR interview 3).

Before I have the survey with you, I was think less about the benefit or the way that I use, but now I'll think about it. And if I think it's useful for me, I'll use it more frequent (Zara, SR interview 3).

As the quotes suggest, students' experiences of posting weekly DDs and participating in the SR interviews were deemed to be extremely thought-provoking, stimulating, and impactful on their subsequent attitude towards TELL. They believed that a lot of their awareness towards the tools, individual learning styles, and strategies emerged from participating in the research. This was specifically identified as a key contextual factor in helping them understand and appreciate the usefulness of these tools more. It was not until they participated in phase II that they started to think about what they were doing, how they were doing it, and, eventually, why they were doing it. This reflection also led some to alter their attitude from neutral or even negative to being very positive and open to the use of technology and to value its use and results. In addition to the benefits (in Fig. 12.3), students started to realize that “*This is my opportunity to learn in Canada, and I want to improve my English skills as soon as possible. And I spend a lot of money in there, I want to make it valuable*” (Zara). These realizations even made them change their behaviour, take ownership of their learning, and work harder, look for more apps/tools to reap more benefits, and optimize the use of the tools that were currently made available to them.

Thus, the recalling of past behaviour and activities of learning English in China and comparing that with their present experience in Canada (a prompt in their DD post 1) made them aware of mistakes made, time wasted, and opportunities lost. Overall, it seemed that they became more confident, conscientious, and independent language learners through the use of technology (Ahmed, 2020), through the awareness raised by the research study, and through the interactions with the researcher.

Pedagogical Factors

The pedagogical factors that seemed to impact students' attitudes directly were shaped by their EAP course teacher, Pierre. These factors include students' beliefs about the role of Pierre, his attitude towards the effectiveness and usefulness of the tools he used to teach.

Beliefs in the Role of their EAP Teacher

At the beginning of the class, most of our class didn't use Google Chrome or any Google technology before, and [Pierre] ask us to download the Google Chrome on our computers, and teach us to download some several useful technology, things like the Google Plus, Google Hangout and Google Slides and Google Doc. And he says in the future study, we will use these tools to help us to learn in this class and how to connect with each other (Amy, SR interview 1).

All the students agreed in their SR interview 1 that because Pierre introduced them to the G suite tools (in Table 12.1) and asked them to complete all tasks using those, they just used prior to even thinking about its benefits (Catherine, Amy). They believed that the role of a teacher was pivotal in introducing and promoting the use of educational technologies (Aubrey, 2014; Kern, 2011; Knobel & Kalman, 2016; Zhang, 2011). As the responsibility of technology introduction lies on the teacher (Naomi, Zara), they applauded Pierre (Naomi, Amy, Catherine) for making their learning "convenient" and "easier for... comprehension" (Eric). This was quite a contrast to a test passing (Walter, Kacey) and vocabulary-memorizing (Eric, John, Walter) previous experience they had in China.

In the FG interview, students talked about the teacher being a "guide" (Tracey), a "mentor" (Wesley), a "resource of knowledge" (Jake), a facilitator (Wesley) and the key to introducing them to technology. In John's words, "I think teachers role is...[Pierre] told us how to use the technology and how to make the study and technology together to make our study more better, more convenient".

The Teacher's Attitude

If the teacher don't use some technologies in class and they don't ask us to use it, I will not use it by myself" (Zara, SR interview 1).

In talking about teacher's attitude towards influencing students, like Zara, John too believed, "You know, if Pierre [EAP course teacher] not teach us to use the Google, teach us to use the Google Drive, Google Doc, and we never know how Google meaning". Whereas "Yeah. In China we never use this, and you never will take a computer or cell phone with you in the classroom" (John, SR interview 1). Students agreed that the attitude of a teacher towards technology influenced their attitude towards and subsequent use of technology (Walter, SR interview 3; John, Naomi, and Catherine, SR interview 1).

Beliefs in the Effectiveness and Usefulness of Tools Used

In the FG interview, students discussed at length their first day of EAP class. Table 12.3 provides students' specific comments on the usefulness of these tools.

Table 12.3 Student reported effectiveness and usefulness of tools used in the EAP course

Student comments about effectiveness and usefulness of tools used		
Tools	Reported usefulness	Students' comments
Google Drive	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work efficiently 2. Collaborate and share work in and out of class 3. Save time 4. Save and access documents/work easily 	Zara, <i>"Use technologies in [EAP 1] course can help us to save a lot of time and we can share our work on Google Drive and so we can help each other and it also make the work more efficient, ya"</i>
Google Docs and Slide	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Synchronous work (group/pair) and instant feedback 2. Synchronous access and convenience 3. Access from anywhere 	Jacey, <i>"Aa, I like when we're writing on Google Drive, it is so easy to share with classmates or [Pierre], we just need to go to our folder to see our changes or something and we don't need to write it, we need to resend. We just fixing the Google document"</i>
Google+ Community	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Collaborate and work with classmate/s 2. Convenient sharing of information 3. Clarify queries easily 4. Easily upload/share videos 	Eric, <i>"yes, before I never used those Google tools, so I start use those technology, its those tools are very convenient, so we can cooperate [collaborate] with our classmate and also we can asking some questions after class, can post something on Google community, so its surprise me, because it's very convenient and I use them with um"</i>
Google+ Hangout	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Up to date/changed information of class schedule/test/task 2. Instant sharing of information/queries 3. Chatting with peers/teacher for clarification 	Kacey, <i>"Google hangouts, teacher always remind us what do we need to take and some homework feedback"</i>
Google Chrome	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Search for information/videos 5. Search for articles/reading/supporting materials for class debate, presentation, assignment 6. Improve vocabulary (look up word meaning) 	Walter, <i>"Absolutely very useful, for example, we're trying to do something, presentation, or writing article, finding information on the website because some websites can provide us with some information and also we use it everyday, also we look up the hard words, we look it up so I think technology help us a lot, so its very useful"</i>

Students found these tools impacting their attitude through increasing their work efficiency and aiding them in meeting submission deadlines. The instant feedback and often real-time text co-construction that takes place on these platforms during group or pair editing or writing is very much a normal daily part of the “hyper-collaborative participatory culture that has become ubiquitous across the Internet” today (Kessler, 2013, p. 307).

A quest designed by Pierre using Google+ Map and Google+ Community on their second day of class was discussed at length by all the students. Using the Google+ Map students was tasked individually to find a different location on the university campus assigned by Pierre and video record their journey. Afterwards, they posted the video and shared their experience with the rest of the class on their Google+ Community group. On their quest, they were also encouraged to stop and ask passers-by for directions. Theoretically, this allowed students to engage in limited, but authentic language use. This Google-supported activity was associated with meaningful and authentic language practices (Kessler, 2013) that language practitioners are encouraged today to incorporate in their pedagogy in order to “enhance the spectrum of language learning experiences for students” (Kessler, 2018, p. 214).

Thus, at the end of their EAP course, heightened awareness and subsequent increased use of educational tools were reported by students in the online Survey 2 and FG interview data.

Implications and Concluding Remarks

In examining the use of TELL, the key factors that seemed to influence students’ beliefs were enhanced exposure to technology tools, positive experiences while participating in the EAP course, and the role of the EAP teacher in facilitating students’ use of technology. The change of students’ beliefs (see Fig. 12.3)—from gauging constraints to realizing the potential benefits and effectiveness of educational tools (see Table 12.3), from merely following Pierre’s directions to becoming critical about the what, why, and how’s of tool use—warrants “domain-based training” (Stockwell, 2015). Based on the definitions of training types by Stockwell (2015), the student cohort of this study received “technical training” (how to use it) in week one from their teacher that oriented them with the G suite tools. “Strategic training” (what to do with it) was handled on an ongoing basis when or if a problem arose in using a tool or feature of a tool. Not only the teacher but also students were observed in class to have helped their peers in providing strategic training. However, “pedagogical training” (why to use it) that had actually impacted students’ attitude and belief change was not provided directly by their class teacher. In fact, students’ realization about the benefits, effectiveness, and usefulness of the educational tools, and the role of their teacher in implementing these tools surfaced through the online surveys, DD posts, SR interviews, and FG interviews of the research study.

Therefore, it can be said that for effective language learning, technical training needs to be ongoing, initially conducted more frequently by the language teacher,

and then addressed when/if required as students become more skilful with continued tool use. Strategic and pedagogical training can happen biweekly (every two weeks), where the teacher conducts the first set of these two pieces of training, and then students under teacher supervision can be encouraged to take turns conducting these biweekly trainings in refreshing and reviewing their learnt skills through peer training. This study specifically endorses the great need for pedagogical training that actually led students to search for more tools for learning, change their overall attitude and belief towards TELL through an emerging critical awareness towards tool use. This critical awareness further led to the emergence of some twenty-first-century skills and developed learner autonomy (Ahmed, 2020).

Furthermore, as achievement of learner autonomy is deemed to be a precondition for effective language learning (Benson, 2011), teachers look to incorporate TELL tools in their curriculum and pedagogy in support of this. However, for the teacher to be able to wear multiple hats of a facilitator, helper, coordinator, counsellor, consultant, advisor, knower, and resource (Benson, 2011) towards fostering learner autonomy, ongoing teacher training and education is required. Teacher training is essential specifically in integrating pedagogy-informed TELL practices towards fully supporting the academic goals of the programme. Teacher education is also required in providing technical, strategic, and pedagogical training to learners (Stockwell, 2015), integrating, and adopting a range of rapidly evolving technologies with a focus on making it learner-centred, being critical and reflective of one's own TELL practices through mini action research as well as developing and changing strategies, and tool incorporation based on student feedback.

Additional research is needed to examine ways that students believe their language teachers can provide effective and systematic domain-based training in TELL incorporation, especially in the context of the extremely demanding time-sensitive EAP environment. Earlier research has proven that with systematic, hands-on pedagogical training learners are twice as more likely to be engaged in their learning, complete more tasks and be more active users of educational technology compared to learners who did not know why they were using technology (Stockwell, 2015). This research is yet another testament to the need for such learner training in TELL teaching.

Endnote

1. This style of referencing students' direct comments with their names and data collection tool mentioned in parenthesis is done to keep track of the evolution of a belief, at a specific point of time (from beginning to the end of the course) in the EAP course. Pseudonyms have been used for all research participants.

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Chapter 13

Teacher Initiatives for Technology Integration in Higher Education in Bangladesh



Rubina Khan, Ahmed Bashir, Bijoy Lal Basu, and Md. Elias Uddin

Abstract Following a period of closure induced by the sudden outbreak of the Coronavirus pandemic, universities in Bangladesh launched synchronous and asynchronous classes on various online platforms. There was little or no provision for online teaching in Bangladeshi universities, and therefore, teachers did not have much prior experience of online classes. Against this backdrop, this study examined university-level English teachers' experiences of technology integration and their initiatives for coping with the demands of online instruction. In particular, it aimed to explore teachers' views of the support they received from their institutions and the role that individual initiatives and professional learning networks played in their development as online educators. Data were collected through in-depth individual interviews with 24 teachers of the Department of English from 12 public and 12 private universities and were analysed thematically. It was found that institutional training for emergency remote teaching provided to teachers was inadequate; nevertheless, teachers learned on the job individually through a trial and error process as well as collaboratively using personal and professional networks. The findings highlight teachers' resilience and their active role in dealing with unforeseen challenges and have implications for teacher training programmes and teacher associations.

Keywords Teacher learning · Technology integration · Personal initiative · Peer support groups · Teacher support networks

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Introduction

Following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, institutions of higher education in Bangladesh, as elsewhere around the world, decided to switch to online classes. The move was driven by the need for continuing education in the context of the pandemic and the lack of a better alternative although the teachers were presumably unfamiliar with remote teaching pedagogies. Teachers were expected to start classes on various online platforms such as Zoom, Google Classroom and Google Meet, which was a new phenomenon for most of them (Bashir, Uddin, Basu & Khan, 2021; Khan, Bashir, Basu & Uddin, 2020). The private universities which rely on tuition fees from students, in general, switched to remote teaching without wasting much time, but the state-sponsored public universities took time before deciding to start online classes. Since the public universities are autonomous institutions and make their own decisions, some started online classes before others. This study was designed and conducted between January 2021 and March 2021 at a time when both private and public universities already had experiences of teaching and assessing online.

Research on emergency remote teaching in the context of Bangladesh has revealed that there was little or no initiative to prepare teachers for online teaching and assessment. Studies (e.g. Khan, Basu, Bashir & Uddin, 2021a, Khan et al., 2020) have mostly focused on the challenges that teachers and students faced in online classes during the initial stage of remote teaching in a low-resourced public university context in Bangladesh. Khan, Jahan, Sultana, Kabir, Haider, & Roshid, (2021b) discuss the coping strategies private university teachers adopted to cope with various challenges in teaching. However, these studies do not reveal much about the teachers' learning experiences as they transitioned to online teaching and assessment. This study was therefore designed to explore how teachers navigated new technologies and to throw light on the avenues of teacher learning. It explored the adequacy of training provided by institutions as perceived by the teachers and examined what initiatives they had undertaken to equip themselves for online teaching and assessment.

The study aimed to answer the following research questions:

1. What support did the teachers in the Departments of English at Bangladeshi universities receive from their institutions and how did they perceive such support?
2. What initiatives did the teachers undertake to learn and integrate new technologies for online teaching?

Literature Review

Learning to use new technologies for teaching and assessment by teachers is a precondition for success in teaching online. Studies conducted before the COVID-19 pandemic have mostly focused on external and internal barriers (e.g. personal

fears, technical and logistical issues, organizational and pedagogical concerns) that impede technology integration (Ertmer, 1999; Ertmer & Ottenbreit-Leftwich, 2010; Ertmer, Ottenbreit-Leftwich, Sadik, Sendurur & Sendurur, 2012; Mueller, Wood, Willoughby, Ross & Specht, 2008). The quantity and quality of technology experiences in teacher preparation programmes have also been identified as influential factors that determine teachers' willingness and ability to integrate new technologies in their classrooms (Tondeur, Sinnaeve, Van Houtte & Van Braak, 2011).

The pandemic, however, has presented a new reality for teachers, where technology integration is not a matter of choice but a necessity. Recent studies in the context of COVID-19 in Bangladesh have shed light on the challenges faced by teachers such as learning to use new technologies, providing students with access to online classes as many did not have appropriate devices, adopting context-appropriate pedagogical strategies and ensuring fairness in assessment (Khan et al., 2020, 2021a). Under the changed scenario, teachers had to acquire the technological as well as pedagogical know-how within the shortest possible time as they had to embark on the online mode of instruction all of a sudden. The following section reviews the literature on teacher learning through participation in workshops typically provided by institutions as well as through the formation of professional networks and peer support groups which may be formal or informal.

Institutional Support

Studies on technology integration have emphasized the role of pre-service and in-service training in preparing teachers to integrate technologies in teaching. Teacher preparation programmes have traditionally used the workshop model which continues to be widely adopted in various contexts (Girvan, Conneely & Tangney, 2016). The effectiveness of training through workshops, however, remains questionable. One weakness of workshops is that they tend to have a rather passive role for teacher-learners (Tam, 2015). One-time workshops cannot enable teachers to integrate technology successfully into their classrooms (Trust, 2017). Institutions may also encourage peer observation for teacher learning (Gosling, 2002; Jones & Gallen, 2016; Motallebzadeh, Hosseinnia & Domskey, 2017). In higher education, observation schemes have different purposes: evaluation of teaching with a focus on quality assurance and improvement of teaching through reflection, dialogue and innovation. For technology integration purposes, however, peer observation needs to be seen as a way of learning and supporting learning rather than as a monitoring process. Other forms of institutional support may be provided through the formation of professional learning communities and professional networks (Paulus, Villegas & Howze-Owens, 2020) which require active teacher learning.

Self-directed and Experiential Learning

Teachers can take initiatives to consolidate the knowledge and skills they have gained through institutional training programmes or to overcome the learning gaps caused by the inadequacy of the training provided by institutions. They may find it beneficial to interact with various sources of learning including online platforms, colleagues, friends and relatives.

According to the experiential learning theory by Kolb (2015), people learn from the practical experiences of doing things. In the process of experiential learning, teachers experiment with different ideas, reflect on the results and learn from them. During this process, teachers use reflection for learning and self-direction (Girvan et al., 2016). It has been argued that teachers can engage in this process individually as well as through shared participation in professional development activities (Molla & Nolan, 2020). In the process of self-directed and experiential learning, teacher agency plays a key role. Teachers can exercise their agency to engage in continuous professional development and learn something new by themselves or in collaboration with community members (Anderson, 2010; Molla & Nolan, 2020; Mouza, 2009; Tondeur et al., 2016a, 2016b; Tondeur et al., 2016a, 2016b).

Research shows connections between teacher agency and their professional learning and development. Heikonen, Pietarinen, Pyhältö, Toom & Soini, (2016) observe that teacher agency adds to teachers' ability to manage their learning with a focus on improving student learning. Again, in a case study in the New Zealand context, Charteris and Smith (2017) found that teacher agency played a crucial role in driving professional learning through teacher inquiry which, as the researchers argued, was found to be more effective than instrumental professional development sourced from external providers. During the pandemic, teachers are required to continually update their knowledge and skills for using online platforms and tools in their pedagogical contexts. The traditional workshop model for professional development may not be very effective in developing teachers' skills for technology integration. Social constructivist learning theory posits that collaborative engagement with new content assists the sense-making process required for long-term retention (Harasim, 2017). Paulus, Villegas & Howze-Owens, (2020) argue that collaboration among peers needs to be ongoing so that teachers can provide and receive 'just-in-time support' (p. 199) and continue to refine their practices. Teacher collaboration can play a potentially valuable role in teachers' professional development in a low-resourced context like Bangladesh.

Professional Learning Communities/Networks

Professional learning communities (PLCs) or professional learning networks (PLNs) that extend beyond their face-to-face contacts can provide teachers with opportunities to engage in ongoing learning and support professional learning and growth

(Trust, Krutka & Carpenter, 2016). Teachers can get involved in national and international organizations to give and receive support in learning to incorporate technology. Thus, PLCs can bridge the gap in technology integration (Paulus, Villegas & Howze-Owens, 2020).

Professional networks may be set up by institutions to facilitate teacher collaboration. Teachers may also seek help from colleagues and mentors (Anderson, 2010). The environment that teachers work in is continually changing. New technologies are making forays into education and teachers are required to incorporate them. While institutional training may be helpful, teachers also need to engage in personal pursuit to progress (Korthagen, 2017) and be self-directed and autonomous (Suryani & Widyastuti, 2015). While teachers can benefit immensely from peer support, many might feel shy to seek help as seeking help may be seen as a sign of weakness in some cultures (Anderson, 2010).

Professional networks can facilitate teacher learning through expert mentorship, group collaboration, verbal encouragement of each other and instant support (Paulus, Villegas & Howze-Owens, 2020; Tam, 2015). Vicarious learning may occur naturally within a PLC as teachers share model lessons and evaluate results collectively (Haverback & Parault, 2011). Through the interaction of these processes, teachers gather the pedagogical and content skills that increase their self-efficacy, effectively reducing the barriers to technology integration (Paulus, Villegas & Howze-Owens, 2020).

The study by Paulus, Villegas & Howze-Owens, (2020) suggests that success in technology integration depends on teachers' self-efficacy beliefs, perceived value for the use of online tools and platforms, perception of cost (time and effort) as well as on opportunities for practical application of theoretical knowledge. Other studies have highlighted factors such as knowledge and expertise to modify teaching materials (Beck, Czerniak & Lumpe, 2000), motivation (Hunzicker, 2004), teacher initiative and agency (Molla & Nolan, 2020), and collaboration and support from peers and administrators (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2006) as critical to success in teacher learning in technology integration.

Online teaching necessarily involves technology integration (Ertmer, 2005; Howard, 2013) as well as changes and adjustments in pedagogies and assessment (Hodges, Moore, Lockee, Trust & Bond, 2020; Khan et al., 2020). Recent research on online education in various contexts reveals the need for specific instructional strategies suited to this mode of delivery. Based on findings in the context of China, Bao (2020), for example, suggests that online instruction requires strategies such as having backup lesson plans, slowing down speech, strengthening student's active learning ability outside of class and combining online learning and offline self-learning. Hussain, Al-Mannai & Agouni, (2020) report on teachers' experiences of innovative technologies such as lecture captures and discussion fora in virtual learning environments (VLEs) at a university in Qatar. Learning to teach online, therefore, requires learning to use new technologies as well as specific instructional strategies that work in remote classes.

The studies reviewed above focus on the ways factors such as institutional support, professional learning communities and practical experience enable teachers to incorporate new technologies in their classrooms. The literature indicates that teachers need support from institutions as well as from professional networks in order to find suitable strategies for online teaching and assessment. The literature also underscores the importance of teachers' self-directed learning in technology integration in online instruction. The current study was designed to explore the role of institutional support and teachers' networks in their professional development as online language educators. It also aimed to examine the role of teacher initiatives to learn new skills for technology integration in emergency online instruction.

Methodology

This study was conducted to gain an understanding of teachers' experiences of online teaching and their initiatives to learn to use various tools and adapt their instructional practices. A qualitative approach was considered suitable for exploring how the participants navigated online education with or without support from institutions, colleagues and peers.

Participants

The universities selected for the study were a mix of both public ($n = 12$) and private universities ($n = 12$). To have a spread, the public universities were chosen from the metropolis and each of the eight administrative divisions. The private universities were selected from the top, middle and low tiers based on their reputation and from within and outside Dhaka city. To select the participants for the study, convenience sampling was used. The participants comprised 24 teachers (13 males and 11 females) from 24 universities in Bangladesh. The participants varied in terms of their gender, teaching experiences, institution type and their location. Table 13.1 gives the demographic information of the participants.

Data Collection and Data Analysis

Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data from the participants. Each of the individual interviews consisted of four main questions followed by a set of sub-questions. We aimed to find how prepared teachers felt they were at the outset of online teaching, what training and support they received, what initiatives they undertook to cope with the demands of online teaching and their evaluation of online teaching experiences in the changed situation of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 13.1 Demographic information

Identifiers		Number
Gender	Male	13
	Female	11
Designation	Professor	2
	Associate Professor	4
	Assistant Professor	11
	Lecturer	7
Experience	Over 20 years	3
	16–20 years	3
	11–15 years	8
	6–10 years	6
	0–5 years	4
Institution	Public universities	12
	Private universities	12

We, the four researchers, made an initial list of teachers from a broad range of backgrounds from both public and private universities situated in different regions of Bangladesh. We contacted them by email as well as over the phone explaining the purpose of the study. We also made it clear that participation was voluntary and that they could opt-out any time if they wished to. 24 teachers expressed their interest and willingness to participate in the study. We, the four members of the research team, interviewed 6 participants each. In all, 24 one-to-one interviews were conducted from January 2021 to March 2021. All interviews were conducted via Zoom and were recorded with the prior permission of the participants. Each interview lasted approximately 30 min. The interview data were transcribed and coded first. The codes were then categorized and analysed based on the common themes that emerged. The participants were coded as Teacher 1 (T1) to Teacher 24 (T24) to maintain anonymity.

Findings

This section presents the findings of the study under two broad themes, namely institutional support and teacher initiatives as well as several supporting sub-themes. Data analysis focused on the kind of support teachers received from their institutions and their perceptions of the support. The analysis also highlighted how they coped with the demands of virtual teaching through self-initiatives, whether alone or in collaboration with colleagues, and through involvement in formal or informal professional networks.

Institutional Support for Technology Integration

The data revealed varying levels of support provided by the institutions as well as teachers' divergent perceptions of the training they received from their institutions in the context of the emergency shift to online instruction. The participants generally claimed that they were not ready for the new mode of instruction because they did not receive adequate training before shifting to online classes or during online teaching.

Inadequate Training

Most teachers from both public and private universities reported attending short training sessions organized by their institutions which they considered to be 'rudimentary' and 'inadequate', and as such were not of great help to them. As noted in the following comment:

At our university, we had a 4-hour training session only. They taught us basic things like how to download the app for taking attendance, and how to take quizzes online. They just introduced us to new platforms. (T4, Private university)

Some participants, already familiar with online tools and platforms, expected more advanced training:

Our university arranged some teacher training. These were basic tutorials for teaching online and these had nothing to do with robust online education. ...I did not find these to be that helpful. I think we needed more support (T22, Private university)

Again, a few teachers from public universities complained of having received no training in the beginning and stated that they were just forced to manage everything about the new mode of teaching on their own. This lack of training and the resultant unpreparedness is reflected in the following teacher comments:

...my university hasn't yet arranged any formal training. We got training by ourselves, ... from organizations like BELTA and American Centre and online sources. (T7, Public university)

...It was not like we were trained first, we were prepared technologically, mentally and then we started classes. No, the story was the opposite: we started classes and faced the problems; it was like we were thrown into the sea, and then given some ways out. (T8, Public University)

Regular Training and Continuous Support

Nevertheless, some institutions, mostly private, provided constant training and support which teachers found very helpful, as one teacher stated:

Now we have regular training. Two training sessions in a month. It is helping tremendously. ... The training is adequate to conduct the classes but now I am learning [about] a lot of applications [on my own]. (T5, Private university)

Another teacher felt that the training was adequate, and it focused on developing teachers' skills in technology use for online teaching and assessment, bridging the gap between their previous skills and expertise for face-to-face teaching and those the new situation called for:

I found the training sessions quite adequate. I learned all the necessary how-to's in those sessions. ... It filled the gap in our knowledge regarding virtual classes. We learnt some important technical aspects of using online class management tools such as checking on attending students, uploading study materials, creating assignments, grading process and so on. (T23, Private university)

The quotations above reveal a clear difference in the extent to which the teachers in the private and public universities received training and support from their institutions. Even though teachers' attitudes were mixed, it was evident that the teachers at private universities generally received training and support from their institutions more frequently than their public university counterparts did. This was probably because the private universities had to do everything in their capacity during the pandemic by retaining their students and ensuring revenues to stay afloat.

Teacher Initiatives for Learning to Integrate Technology

Our second research question led us to explore teachers' initiatives for technology integration. The inadequacy of institutional support and the obligation to meet the demands of the changed situation led many teachers of both public and private universities to undertake a range of initiatives to learn to use technology resources to facilitate teaching and learning in their contexts. This is reflected in the following comment:

I didn't receive any training from my institution. The authority just gave the notice that we have to begin classes online. We had to manage by ourselves this way or that way. (T12, Private university)

Self-initiatives

When asked how they learned various technology skills to conduct online classes, the participants replied that they learned mostly through their personal initiatives and self-training. The following comments reflect the teachers' personal initiatives:

I learned most of the things from YouTube, everything. Anytime I faced any challenge regarding technological glitch or something, I went to YouTube. (T9, Public University)

The situation compelled me to learn, for example, taking a quiz using the quiz assignment in Google form. As I had to conduct a quiz, I had to learn it. I googled it and watched some online videos to learn about this. (T11, Private university)

In addition to self-learning, teachers mentioned that they learned from their colleagues through sharing their experiences. Whenever they faced any problems, they asked their tech-savvy colleagues from their department and other technology-based departments.

I learnt a lot from my departmental colleagues as well as from other colleagues. Often I asked them very silly questions about technical issues and they were incredibly supportive. Colleagues from CSC and EEE departments were very helpful in creating tutorials of different types so that we could use Microsoft Teams effectively. (T24, Private university)

We had an internal collaboration with colleagues. We shared experiences with others. A colleague of mine said his students submitted plagiarized assignments, then others gave him suggestions on what to do. Some asked about how to take quizzes, about question patterns, etc. We solved our problems by helping each other. (T10, Private university)

When asked if they formed any network to collaborate with each other, they stated that there was no instruction from their institutions in this regard. But some participants from both public and private universities pointed out that they took certain initiatives on their own. It may be noted that, in most cases, teacher collaboration was through self-initiatives:

We don't have any formal network. When we face trouble, we call colleagues over the phone and get help. We have a Facebook group where we discuss problems and seek help from one another. Our department chair sometimes arranges meetings to discuss problems teachers are facing so that they can be solved. (T20, Public university)

Apart from learning from their colleagues, the participants also reported learning from their friends and family members:

I learned many things from my younger sister who works in a school. She started online classes earlier than my institution. I also learned from my son and daughter who are also attending online classes in their schools. Sometimes I even consult my friends to overcome problems. (T10, Private university)

Collaboration with Professional and Social Networking Groups

Some participants from public and private universities joined personal and professional networks where they shared their experiences and learned new things from one another. When they encountered any problems, they asked other members for a solution:

I joined LinkedIn and have numerous connections across the globe. Whenever I have problems I write to friends and get immediate responses. (T1, Public university)

This COVID-19 has given me a wonderful opportunity to join professional organizations and learn. I am attending seminars, conferences, webinars organized by BELTA whenever I get the scope and try to learn from those experts (T12, Private university)

The participants used social networking sites like Facebook, Messenger, WhatsApp groups to discuss problems of integrating technology in online teaching and share their experiences and new skills with others, which is reflected in the following quotes:

I and a few colleagues have formed one Messenger and one WhatsApp group where all the teachers of our department are connected. We share our problems, solutions and innovations with each other there. (T19, Public university)

The participants thought that the professional groups on various social media platforms played a key role in teacher learning for technology integration during the pandemic and helped academics to perform their job better. One participant remarked:

I have learned to use various technology resources and have become a better teacher through communicating with my fellow teachers. I learned new skills ... there was professional growth. We also have a responsibility to share and teach what we learned. (T19, Public university)

Another participant stated:

I think a community is important for any profession as it helps us to stay updated and ... provides us the learning opportunity, knowing and researching new areas. I am part of a few communities of ELT which are functioning online at present. Their online sessions, discussions and webinars helped me immensely to better use online platforms, apps and tools. (T23, Private university)

Teacher Initiatives Leading to Positive Learning Experience

Interview data reveal that the teachers, in general, had a positive learning experience while using technology tools in their professional contexts. The teachers reported learning a wide array of new skills for online teaching and assessment. These skills can be categorized into three sets. First, they gathered *skills in the use of technology tools and platforms*, including using Google Classroom, Zoom, Google Meet, Microsoft Teams, Kahoot and Padlet, creating breakout rooms on Zoom, sharing the screen on Zoom and Google Meet, using plagiarism check software, uploading materials in Google Classroom, recording and uploading lectures, creating polls, using a virtual whiteboard, sketchpad, and stylers to integrate lectures and so on. The second set concerns *skills related to online teachings*, such as engaging students in online classrooms, ensuring interaction in online classes, taking attendance in online classes, managing the classroom discourse and so on. The third set of *skills related to online assessment* include setting creative questions, quizzes and assignments; giving feedback and grading assignments and oral presentations; preparing quizzes on Google form and merging it with Google Classroom; organizing competitions by using Kahoot; and so on.

The participant's positive experience of technology integration is echoed in the following comments:

For me, it was a great learning experience. I was accustomed to conducting face-to-face classes, but when it shifted to online classes, I learned the techniques of conducting online classes. For me it is a completely new and positive learning experience. (T11, Private university)

I would say I am more confident now. I now know the applications which I didn't know before. I am trying to take challenges ... each day. I take feedback from students. I see that now they are understanding better... I can see students are learning. (T3, Public university)

Discussion

Since online teaching was a new phenomenon for most teachers, they were required to integrate technologies for teaching and upgrade their pedagogical know-how in

real time to meet the immediate needs of their students and react to the COVID-19 crisis. The analysis of the data revealed that the participants had positive and rewarding learning experiences overall, although institutional initiatives, in many cases, were perceived to be inadequate in meeting their needs. Faced with the challenge of integrating technologies for online classes during the COVID-19 pandemic, however, their first faltering steps were gradually followed by more confident moves as they gained new knowledge, insights and understandings through institutional training, self-training and collaboration with individual colleagues and professional communities.

Institutional Support for Technology Integration

Teachers need institutional support for implementing educational innovations (Fullan, 2015). However, our analysis reveals a lack of institutional support for many teachers. The participants mentioned having encountered difficulties while conducting online classes as they were not equipped initially with the required technology skills for the new mode of instruction. This finding echoes the findings of two recent studies conducted in the Bangladesh context. Khan et al. (2021a) found that the majority (87.3%) of 158 teachers in the Bangladeshi public universities reported not receiving adequate training on online instruction. Another study by Khan et al. (2021b) in the context of private universities in Bangladesh reported that around half (57%) of the participants ($n = 208$) did not have any training but were teaching online. These findings reveal that there is a long way to go when it comes to achieving the goal of 'digital Bangladesh' that the country has been pursuing since the introduction of the ICT policy in 2009 (Rahman, 2015).

The findings also demonstrated that the support that teachers received varied from institution to institution. Some teachers had received regular and adequate training from their institutions. It also appeared that the institutions had varying capacities to support teacher learning for online teaching. Institutions that provided ongoing support were mostly private, and among the public universities, those set up for teaching science and technology courses had the pre-existing infrastructure for blended teaching. They were able to support the teachers when they shifted fully online. Findings also underscored the absence of continuous support from many of the institutions. Teachers in some of these institutions mostly received one-off training sessions which were hardly enough to prepare them for online instruction as short training sessions have many shortcomings (Kirkgöz, 2008). Literature on the implementation of technology integration suggests that teachers benefit from continuous support (Williams, 2017), which was largely missing in some of the universities.

Teacher Initiatives in Learning to Integrate Technology

The findings showed that the participants undertook many initiatives to meet the demands of online teaching and to overcome the problems they encountered while teaching online. The teachers learned mainly by themselves, as well as from their colleagues, friends, family members and from professional and informal social networks.

Self-learning

This study found that teachers learned most of the new skills by themselves, which we can term 'self-training'. As the online mode of teaching was new to most of them and the training they received was not adequate, they were compelled to search for new avenues for learning. The participants reportedly took many initiatives to learn new skills and upgrade their pedagogical knowledge. The availability of the Internet, social media and video-sharing sites such as YouTube allowed them to look for strategies and techniques that are useful for online teaching. They searched online and watched YouTube tutorials, asked their colleagues, friends and sometimes family members whenever they had a problem. These reported activities seemed to reflect 'teacher agency' (Heikonen et al., 2016) in dealing with the professional challenges they encountered and enabled them to manage their own learning and continue online teaching.

The findings revealed that the participants also joined professional organizations, and attended seminars and workshops online. Through these initiatives, teachers developed new skills related to the use of technology for online teaching and learning. It appears that the pandemic provided an impetus for their learning as they had to survive as teachers and contribute to student learning. Although some teachers had an interest in technologies and had decent skills before the pandemic, for others their learning was shaped by their needs in the context of the severity of the pandemic. Thus, they took the initiatives to learn when they were faced with a new problem, and they learned by themselves from online sources and sometimes in collaboration with other colleagues, friends and family members.

Support from Colleagues, Friends and Family Members

The study also showed that the teachers from both private and public universities sought assistance from their colleagues, friends and family members to get a quick response and find solutions to their problems. It was found that this kind of support system was, in most cases, informal rather than supported by the institutions. As teachers found themselves in an unfamiliar territory, they found it convenient to ask for and receive help from close friends and relations. This chimes with the findings of Todd (2020) in the context of Thailand where teachers were reportedly able to overcome most of their initial challenges through support-seeking practices.

Professional and Social Networking Groups

Our data revealed that the participants joined professional organizations and attended seminars and workshops. Professional organizations and networks play an important role in teachers' professional development (Mouza, 2009; Trust et al., 2016). Professional networks can facilitate teacher learning through expert mentorship, group collaboration, verbal encouragement of each other and instant support (Paulus, Villegas & Howze-Owens, 2020; Tam, 2015). The teachers in our study learned new things through participation in these professional network initiatives. It was found that teachers also used their social media groups to solve their problems. Whenever they encountered any problems, they asked the members for suggestions. Others also shared their experiences of online teaching and learning on the social media platforms like Facebook, Messenger and WhatsApp. It shows that social media, primarily used for social interaction, became a platform for learning and teaching new technological skills during the pandemic.

Although most teachers started online classes with almost no training or inadequate training, the findings reveal that within six months of shifting to online teaching when data for this study was being collected, they felt that they were competent and confident to conduct online classes. They claimed that they had learned many new skills through training or personal endeavours which included collaborating with others. The findings highlight teacher resilience and their willingness to learn autonomously and collaboratively as well.

Conclusion and Implications

This study is an in-depth examination of teacher learning for online teaching in select tertiary educational institutions in Bangladesh during the transitional phase. The study shed light on the role of teachers' personal efforts and informal networks for professional learning. Previous research had mostly focused on the effectiveness of pre-service training and institutional support for teacher learning in technology integration in resource-rich contexts. This study explored teachers' experiences in an under-resourced context, and we believe that the findings have implications for teacher education programmes.

This study brought to light teacher initiatives for self-directed and independent learning in the absence of proper institutional training during the COVID-19 pandemic. It was also revealed that the teachers had considerable resilience in overcoming the initial challenges. The study also provided evidence that teacher initiatives in technology integration fed off teachers' informal networks with people from outside of academia, e.g. friends, relatives and family members. It was revealed that teachers learned through collaboration with peers in social media groups, mostly formed informally. The contribution of these communities needs to be acknowledged and shared so that more teachers can form such networks and reap the benefits of such collaboration.

It would be worth mentioning that activities of formal professional learning communities (PLCs) were least reported in our data. In Bangladesh, there are professional associations like the Bangladesh English Language Teachers Association (BELTA). The BELTA regularly organizes national and international seminars and conferences in addition to workshops and online professional development sessions/webinars. Under the circumstances, teacher associations can intensify their activities for promoting the latest understanding and developments in ELT and also enhance the professional development of teachers. This can be achieved through the formation of a technology-focused special interest group (SIG). Regular online interactions among the members can strengthen their abilities and skills.

The study mainly explored teachers' experiences at the initial stage of the shift to the online mode of instruction. Nevertheless, we believe that the findings will feed into any teacher training initiatives for technology integration in Bangladesh during as well as after the pandemic. As educational institutions attempt to make up for the time lost during the pandemic, the number of classes and exams is likely to go up. In contexts like Bangladesh where there are fewer classrooms than required and classes are typically overcrowded, online classes in different forms will need to be continued to supplement face-to-face teaching. The infrastructure and knowledgebase deriving from teacher networks need to be protected and sustained to cope with the pressure of providing education in post-pandemic times. The findings point to the importance of forming networks and providing incentives and support to the teachers for joining networks. Based on the findings of the study, we put forward the following recommendations:

1. In addition to workshops, teachers need to be provided with constant and ongoing support for the successful integration of technology.
2. Training should focus on harnessing technology for improving the online delivery of teaching and assessment.
3. To facilitate teachers' professional development, institutions should fund or sponsor teachers to help them join different professional associations such as Bangladesh English Language Teachers Association (BELTA), Nepal English Language Teachers Association (NELTA), Japan Association of Language Teachers (JALT) and International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (IATEFL).
4. Institutions may encourage teachers to form networks and communities to help each other learn.

This chapter focused on teacher learning through institutional support as well as personal initiatives. Future studies can investigate the role of institutional leadership in catering to the needs of teachers and students during an innovation or educational reform at critical times. Further studies may explore factors that facilitate or impede the formation and operations of professional networks and the outcome of teacher collaborations in teachers' professional development. It might also be worthwhile to examine what role online teacher collaborations play in post-pandemic education.

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Chapter 14

Wiki-Based Collaborative Writing: Undergraduate Learners' Perspectives



Anjuman Ara

Abstract This chapter discusses the prospects of online collaborative writing on wikis, asynchronous web tools, from Bangladeshi EFL learners' perspectives. The participants in the study included 17 first-semester undergraduate students majoring in English at a public university. Data collected from questionnaires, post-questionnaire discussion and class wiki archives of self/peer writing, edits and feedback reveal students' consistently growing interest in wiki-based writing. The students emphasised its multiple yet easily connected pages with online word processing affordances for writing and editing recursively, thus, visibly improving their writing skills. However, their online collaboration was challenged by internet cost, connectivity, mobile technology, wiki screen, peer communication gaps and gender impacts. This study has implications for teachers aiming to implement online learner collaboration both during the COVID-19 pandemic situation and afterwards when onsite classes resume in the future. The study also suggests concerned authorities including the government for ensuring easy and cost-effective access to web-based collaboration.

Keywords Wikis · Collaborative writing · Bangladeshi EFL learner perspectives · Online education in Bangladesh · COVID-19

Introduction

Incorporating technology into foreign language education began in the 1960s when computers were used to practice drills for accurate pronunciation and vocabulary. Since the late 1980s, however, with the advancement of computer and mobile technologies, pedagogical applications of technological tools have become cognitively more engaging and collaborative (Motteram, 2013; Warschauer & Kern, 2000). The transition was largely motivated by the social constructivist theory of learning

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(Vygotsky, 1978), which suggests that knowledge develops better in a social environment because individuals can scaffold and help each other to reach a higher level of development, termed the ‘zone of proximal development (ZPD)’ (p. 86), which might not be achieved alone. Swain (2000, p.102) used the term ‘collaborative dialogue’ to suggest that dialogues help students collaborate in problem-solving tasks and build their knowledge. Peer teaching and peer feedback emerged in the pedagogy to support collaborative learning (Nassaji & Swain, 2000; Oxford, 1997; Storch, 2005). Warschauer and Kern (2000, p. 5) opine that the sociocognitive perspective of learning introduced a radical transformation in pedagogy because reading and writing were now ‘viewed as processes embedded in particular sociocultural contexts’ so that learners needed more ‘authentic social discourse situations and discourse communities’ than only ‘comprehensible input’.

Following these arguments, various web tools including wikis, blogs and Google docs were introduced to promote learner collaboration and autonomy (Motteram, 2013). Pedagogical applications of wikis have been explored in different contexts from various perspectives including learner perceptions (Lee, 2008), learners’ collaboration and meaning-making (Kessler, 2009), learner competence and performance (Chao & Lo, 2011; Woo, Chu, Ho & Li, 2011), peer feedback (Ma, 2019), group interaction patterns (Elabdali & Arnold, 2020; Li & Zhu, 2017) and learner participation in discussion forums (Nami & Marandi, 2013). There have been few studies in Bangladesh in this area. The learners in Hasan and Ibrahim’s (2017) study, for example, did not write in class wikis but used those already created and available on the internet as resources for reading and writing in English. Using other tools such as PowerPoints, emails, FaceBook, YouTube, smartphones, blogs, Google images, Google docs, etc. has increased in Bangladesh, yet to a limited scale and within limited logistic facilities (Begum, 2011; Hasan & Ibrahim, 2017; Hoque & Siddiqua, 2020; Islam, 2020; Karmaker & Paul, 2020; Mumen, 2019; Rashid & Rouf, 2020). National ICT Policy 2009 was undertaken to incorporate ICT into education, among other fields, for equality and national development (Ministry of Science and Information and Communication Technology of Bangladesh, 2009). However, in a study on using technology for teaching adults, Slaouti, Onat-Stelma and Motteram (2013, p. 84) mention how one of their UK university-based teachers observed ‘some [adult learners] from specific countries as not ‘quite understanding the use of IT idea’; her Bangladeshi learners, for example, ‘are not too au fait with computer usage’. Recent studies (e.g. Khan, Bashir, Basu & Uddin, 2020; Khan, Basu, Bashir & Uddin, 2021; Rashid & Rouf, 2020) on public universities in Bangladesh reveal various technological and psychological barriers for both teachers and students. The case study of Rashid and Rouf (2020) highlighted three important obstacles: ‘inadequate technological facilities, poor ICT knowledge, [and] negative attitudes of the parents’ (p. 79).

COVID-19 both heightened and enlightened the lack of required technological competence and facilities by students, teachers and institutions when a new culture of distance and virtual education emerged in Bangladesh in 2020. To contain the spread of Coronavirus disease, all academic institutions in Bangladesh were declared closed on 17 March 2020 by the government. Later in June 2020, the public universities

decided to embark on virtual teaching. Both teachers and learners were now challenged by the abrupt transition from onsite to online instruction because they did not have sufficient equipment, prior knowledge, experiences, skills and training. Khan et al. (2020, 2021) examined the challenges of online remote teaching during COVID-19 from teachers' and learners' perspectives and identified various technological and psychological barriers relating to internet connectivity, cost, equity, pedagogy, assessment, materials and so forth.

During COVID quarantine in July 2020, when required to teach writing online, the teacher-researcher conducted a study of wiki-mediated writing on a small group of adult tertiary level EFL students majoring in English at a public university in Bangladesh, which forms the basis of the content of this chapter. The study was motivated by the following question:

How do Bangladeshi EFL learners perceive their online collaborative writing on web tools such as wikis?

The study aimed to identify the prospects and challenges of using wikis for online and remote collaborative writing from undergraduate EFL learner perspectives. The purpose was to evaluate the effectiveness of wikis in the current and post COVID-19 teaching contexts in Bangladesh. Learner perceptions are always valued in education as they reveal their motivation and needs. Finding out about learners' motivation and needs is useful in revising teaching approaches, materials and assessments (e.g. Ara & Rabbani, 2018; Brookhart, 2003). Since online teaching was a new phenomenon in Bangladesh, investigation of learner perceptions of use of technology tools was deemed necessary.

Wiki-Mediated Collaborative Writing

Wikis are computer-mediated communication (CMC) tools, also known as web 2.0 tools, which are marked for their collaborative functions (Kessler, 2009). There are currently two free wiki platforms: PBwiki and Zohowiki. Compared to other CMC tools such as blogs, Google docs and emails, wikis provide greater opportunities to negotiate and co-author because of their open editing access and multimodal workspace (Kessler, 2009). Teachers at any time can decide who to invite and at what level of permission such as reader, writer or editor. The co-authors and reviewers can insert texts, images, footnotes and comments with visual effects of colours, highlights, font style and size, eraser, etc. none of which require high technology knowledge such as Hyper-text Markup Language (HTML) or 'other coding' (Frumkin, 2005, p. 18).

Researchers (e.g. Hayes & Flower, 1980) emphasise that writing is a mental process that involves a 'recursive composing process which involves planning, drafting and editing and helps writers generate and reformulate their ideas with 'appropriate rhetorical and linguistic means' (Silva, 1993, p. 657). In this respect, wikis provide significantly low-affective filter platforms because each wiki page has

online word processing, the flexibility and fluidity of which helps students to write and edit recursively (Pennington, 1996). The editions are permanently recorded and displayed with highlights in the history pages which allow retrieving the previous version(s) if necessary. The visibility and transparency of wiki pages make learners cautious of ‘malicious behaviour’ when co-editing or writing comments (Godwin-Jones, 2003, p. 15). As an asynchronous tool, wikis motivate students to critically think and reflect before writing or editing (Lee, 2008). Empirical studies (e.g. Lee, 2008, 2010) suggest that multiple readerships encourage learners to reformulate their content, organisations and grammar.

However, challenges of wiki-based writing were also identified in several studies. The studies of Elabdali and Arnold (2020), Ma (2019) and Li and Zhu (2017) revealed a lack of mutual and equal inter-group/intra-group interactions which was often caused by wiki visibility and which reflected similar learner behaviours as observed in the face-to-face group interactions in Storch’s (2002) study. According to Wheeler, Yeomans and Wheeler (2008), individual learner preferences also affect learner motivation to wiki writing. Furthermore, the challenges over claiming the ownership of the writing by students were observed by Lin and Kelsey (2009) and Wheeler et al. (2008). Nevertheless, in general, wiki-based collaboration has been found effective.

The Present Study

The present study was conducted from July 1, 2020 to July 31, 2020. The participants included 17 first-semester undergraduate students (10 female and seven male) of the Department of English at a premier public university in Bangladesh. During the study, the class met online via Zoom twice a week. FaceBook Messenger group and private emails were used for sharing announcements, short instructions and inquiries.

The free education platform of Pbwiki was used to create a class wiki: tutorialeng101.pbworks.com (see Fig. 14.1 for the tutorial class wiki homepage). 17 students were divided into six groups of three, with one group of two and were made editors. Pages were created, modified and linked according to the needs of the students. Students were also allowed to create and modify their respective group pages and upload files and videos if needed. However, they were informed to not edit other group pages than their own, although they could always visit, read and leave comments.

It was acknowledged that the novelty of a new tool such as wikis might create mixed attitudes among the students. Woo et al. (2011) note, learners might be enthusiastic to explore wikis as a new technology, in which cases, wikis can be exploited for the most benefits. In other cases, when students are reluctant or less confident, they need teacher guidance and demonstrations. Lee (2008) suggests that learners can explore YouTube tutorial videos and wiki trial pages to practice writing, creating/editing pages, uploading documents/photos/videos, tracking history pages

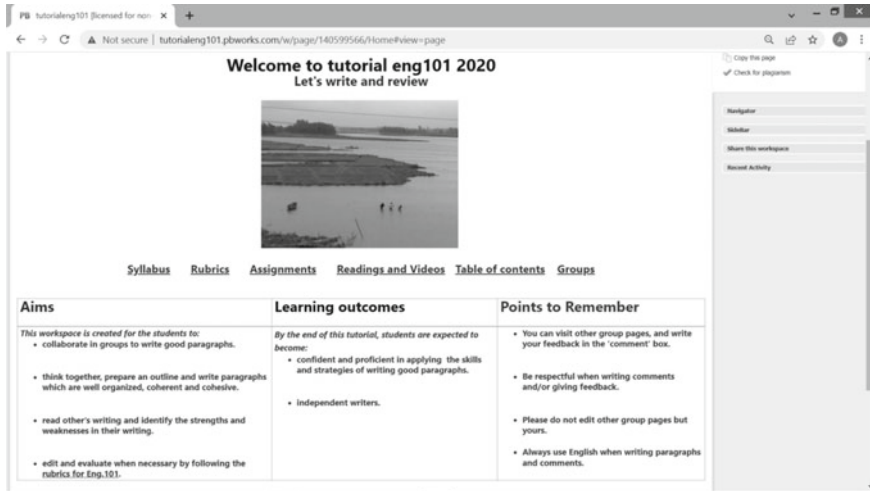


Fig. 14.1 Class wiki home page

and so on. Following these suggestions, the students of the present study were demonstrated via Zoom meetings and provided with YouTube tutorial videos and online reading materials (e.g. Kiliçkaya, n.d.) on how to use the class wiki.

Following the course requirements of Eng.101 (*Developing English Language Skills*), taught by the author, the students were given the tasks of writing descriptive paragraphs into five phases: (i) generating and selecting ideas (brainstorming step 1), (ii) synthesising and ordering the ideas (brainstorming step 2), (iii) preparing an outline, (iv) writing the first draft and (v) editing the paragraph. The topics for the paragraphs were negotiated between the teacher and the group. Students were required to individually generate ideas and make primary selections in the first step of brainstorming.

The Departmental textbooks *Endeavour* (Sinha, Mahboob, Bashir, Basu & Akhter, 2017) and *Writing Essays with Ease* (Khan et al., 2017) and online resources were used for references. Self/peer and teacher feedback were based on Eng.101 rubrics, a brief outline of which was given in the wiki. Students were advised to find further details in the Department Student Handbook.

Methodology

A qualitative approach was followed to collect and analyse the data. Data were collected through two sets of questionnaire and one post-questionnaire group discussion, as well as from the class wiki archives. The first questionnaire was distributed at the beginning of the study, following the teacher's introduction to wikis. The purpose was to find out how much the learners were technologically and mentally prepared

for online collaborative writing and how they initially perceived wiki-based writing activities. The second questionnaire was distributed at the end of the study. It aimed to compare learners' experiential perceptions of using wikis for online collaboration with their initial perceptions. The first questionnaire included 12 questions while the second questionnaire had 16 items, both having open-ended and closed items. The former questionnaire included questions on what gadgets, computer skills and internet facilities the participants had, what online (social) media or platforms they were already familiar with, if they had prior knowledge of and were interested in using wikis, what challenges they perceived to face with wiki-based collaborative writing and what suggestions they offered for effective application of the wiki platform. The second questionnaire focused on learners' use of wikis in terms of frequency and activity types, compatibility of their gadgets, affordances and challenges of wikis, similarities and differences between online and face-to-face interactions, the role of teachers and learner suggestions for future application of wikis. Both the questionnaires were prepared on Google Forms and emailed to the students. 14 (eight female and six male) out of 17 students responded to each questionnaire.

A short follow-up discussion was arranged on Zoom for 25 min with 11 students, who were able to attend the session on the day of the meeting. The aim was to clarify issues relating to gender and wiki platforms which were raised by some of the respondents in the second questionnaire. The students were asked questions on if and/or how their online communication and collaboration were affected by the gender of their partners and what they meant by 'easier' or 'user-friendly' access to wikis. The former issue of gender was identified by a male student as a challenge to their online collaboration while the latter was suggested by several students for using wikis effectively in the future. The main responses of the discussion were written down for analysis as they could not be recorded for technological reasons. Finally, the class wiki page histories of self/peer edits and comments were explored to identify correlations between student responses to the questionnaires and their collaboration in wikis.

Data collected through the questionnaires, group discussion and wiki archives were analysed and coded separately for developing themes. Later, the themes which emerged from the different instruments were compared and synthesised for discussion.

Findings

The following major themes were developed from the data analysis.

The Novelty of the Online Writing Tools

Wikis were new concepts for the participating students because none of them had ever heard or used wikis before. Although they found the YouTube tutorial videos and readings on wikis useful, they assumed that the unfamiliarity might pose problems and ‘take some time to understand’ and work in wikis. Their initial response was therefore mixed. 8 out of 14 students were very interested to use wikis as an ‘alternative’ tool for learning during the pandemic. Four students remained neutral about their responses and two respondents showed little interest.

Based on their experiences of using wikis for one month, all respondents in both the second questionnaire and the post-questionnaire discussion agreed that wikis helped them develop their writing skills. 13 out of 14 respondents showed great interest in using wikis in both online and onsite teaching in future. They emphasised the facilities of online word processing for multiple edits, colour coding, highlights and font, sharing study materials and group activities in one platform (i.e. visibility), exchanging comments and so forth which they described as ‘easy’ and ‘simple [in] structure’ and helpful to ‘enrich [their] thinking power’ (students 1 & 4). They were only sceptical of employing wikis in the cases of bigger class sizes above 50.

Technological and Financial Barriers

Internet Connectivity and Affordability

Connectivity and affordability highly affected learner collaboration and performance. During the study, the majority of the students lived outside Dhaka, the capital and the university and some in very remote areas, as shown in Fig. 14.2, which means that they had limited access to the internet. Unstable internet connection slowed down their work when downloading pages and saving their writing in wikis.

Only three respondents had wifi access and two of them were Dhaka-based. The rest of them always used mobile data. One respondent added a sad emoji when writing

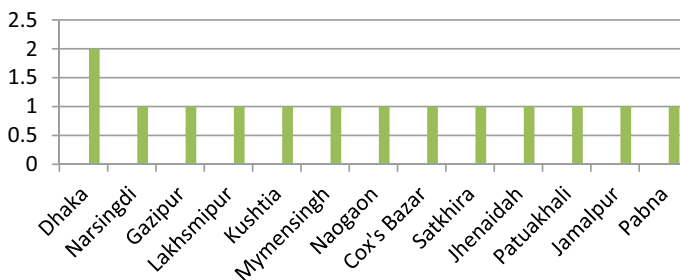


Fig. 14.2 Learners' residence during COVID-19

about the cost, suggesting that financially learners were challenged and/or reluctant to bear the cost of scaffolding or writing online.

Lack and/or Limitations of Devices

Two respondents reported that they had no computers or smartphones of their own and that they had to borrow one from their friends and relatives or visit the local internet cafés when needed. Other students, except for two, did not own computers which, they thought, were more suitable for viewing, writing and editing in the wiki because of the bigger Pbwiki screens. One student wrote:

I have no computer or laptop and the phone screen is so small for Pbwiki pages. Writing shows so little and it is difficult to type in phone screen in Pbwikis. (Student 5)

Also, the students faced problems while copying and undoing texts ‘smoothly’ and inserting texts in tables by using smartphones. The asynchronous access to wikis also posed problems. One respondent wrote:

When we are working together we can’t work simultaneously. We had to go one by one. It was a problem. (Student 8)

In order to overcome their technological barriers, most students used traditional writing instruments of pen and paper to brainstorm and draft which they pasted later into the wiki. Only one participant always wrote directly in the wiki.

Sociocultural Barriers

One male student, working in a mixed-gender group, identified gender as a barrier to online collaboration and group performance because their female partner was reluctant to speak over the phone or messenger to discuss their topic/paragraph. Students from other mixed-gender groups, however, did not claim if gender facilitated or affected their peer solidarity, communications and performance. One of the female students only regretted that she was unable to visit internet cafés and had to ‘stay home’ when she could not purchase mobile data.

Interaction and Performance in the Wiki

Seven students claimed in the second questionnaire to have visited and/or worked in wikis often while two students remained active every day and the rest of them the day before class. The wiki archives did not reflect an equal level of collaboration among the students. Although most group members participated in the brainstorming and outlining activities, one particular student from each group completed the task of writing and editing the full paragraph. It was revealed through discussion that some of the group members had stopped communicating and collaborating with the

Table 14.1 Editions by group members

Groups (Male members = M, Female members = F)	Number of total revisions/editions	First draft	Last edit	Entries by peers (M: F)
A (M1, F2)	5	31 July	17 Aug	M 5: F 0
B (M2, F1)	7	30 July	23 Aug	M 6: F 1
C (M2, F1)	42	3 Aug	12 Sep	M 0: F 42
D (M1, F 2)	3	July 30	18 Aug	M 3: F 0
E (F3)	2	Aug 13	13 Aug	by the same member
F (M1, F1)	11	July 30	7 Aug	M 10: F 1

group even on messenger and over the phone, let alone the wiki. Table 14.1 shows that two out of six groups were unable to submit their first drafts by 31 July 2020 and that five groups continued to edit their writing till August 2020 and one group till September 12. Also, the male members in the mixed-gender groups were more active than their female partners, except for those in group C, which was led by the only female member.

Descriptions or comments were not added when co-editing. Except for one student, others did not comment on other group pages. Even, the comments, as given below, were focused more on the cultural references and meaning than the paragraph structure or organisation:

Student reviewer: *Who has not heard the trade cry ‘Cha-garam’ or ‘Thanda pani’ in the railway station? So many kinds of peoples or people?* (Student 14).

Student writer: *By this line, I mean to say that these sounds are very common in railway station. Am i right?* (Student 6).

The reviewer draws the writer’s attention to form (i.e. ‘peoples’ versus ‘people’); however, the writer does not address the problem and also overlooks capitalisation of ‘i’ in the self-response. The use of ‘I’ in the writer’s response also reflects sole authorship, not mutual, of the writing.

Online Versus Onsite Collaboration/Interaction

The participants highlighted the essential benefits and challenges of wiki-based and face-to-face collaboration. They acknowledged that collaboration in both cases required similar responsibilities on the partners to ‘work together, share ideas and input a result of [their] discussion’ (Student 13). However, they noticed that wikis helped in individual writing development through multiple edits, comments, etc. which were difficult to maintain in traditional group activities, mostly because of time and space constraints. They also opined that the online collaboration was not as fruitful or fun as in traditional interaction mostly because of poor connectivity and/or

lack of devices. One of them wrote: ‘Face-to-face discussion is more sufficient [i.e. efficient] than chatting via online’ (Student 4).

Learner Suggestions for Future Application of Wikis

Students suggested that effective use of wikis involved teachers, peers, institutions, the government, phone companies and wiki personnel alike. First, teachers should always introduce wiki features and functions, provide clear instructions, ‘information and tips’, give students enough time to write and revise, divide students into smaller groups and meet them regularly. Secondly, the respondents emphasised timely and regular peer meetings and good cooperation. Finally, they suggested concerned authorities for taking initiatives to ‘ensure the network connection’, reduce the internet cost and enhance the compatibility of smartphone technologies and/or wiki software for ‘easier’ and ‘user-friendly’ access to wikis.

Discussion and Implications

The findings reveal positive learner perceptions of wikis as well as potential challenges for low-resourced contexts such as Bangladesh. While the study reveals positive learner attitudes and motivation to adapt to a new culture of online and remote education, it also shows how learners are constrained by their poor technological facilities, financial conditions, geographic locations, lack of peer cooperation and face-to-face interactions and sociocultural barriers. The findings chime with teacher and learner perceptions of emergency online teaching in Bangladesh during the COVID-19 pandemic as reported by Khan et al., (2020, 2021). The findings both support and counter the observation about Bangladeshi learners being ‘not too au fait with computer usage’ made in Slaouti et al.’s (2013, p. 84) study discussed earlier. The students, who had been used to face-to-face and pen and paper-based instruction since childhood and who lacked necessary skills and logistics for remote online learning, were naturally overwhelmed with the novelty of the wiki platform at the beginning, but eventually, they developed positive attitudes to it. This is explicitly revealed through the number of students (13 out of 14 respondents) who wanted to work on this platform in the future. They were motivated by the wiki affordances of online word processing, hyperlinks, visibility and so forth, which helped them write collaboratively and recursively. Their use of traditional writing instruments such as pen and paper reveals that students develop their own strategies by applying their existing knowledge and available resources in order to cope with the potential learning and technological difficulties.

The present study sheds important light on the challenges of wiki software, smartphone technology and gender impacts which were not observed in previous wiki-based studies. The participants noted that wiki screens and tables were more

compatible with computer technology than smartphones. Furthermore, the findings reveal complex relations between learners' socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds and their motivation for web-based collaborative writing. On the one hand, gender inequities were reflected in online scaffolding because the female students were outperformed by their male partners and were probably inhibited while working with the opposite gender and visiting internet cafés, mostly in the rural areas of Bangladesh. It appears that the learner's poor technological and financial backgrounds and the social gender biases restrict women's mobility both in the physical society and the virtual platform. The only two students who exchanged comments in the wiki happened to be male students. Nevertheless, it should be noted that there was a female student, who edited their group writing alone for 42 times from July 2020 to September 2020, implying that highly self-driven students may conquer their social and geographical barriers. The other male and female students who never edited their group writing were probably either poorly motivated or extremely disadvantaged. Sultana (2018) argued that female students are culturally encouraged not to voice their thoughts and opinions, but from our limited data it is not possible to arrive at any conclusion regarding any link between gender and online participation.

This study also brings to light the difficulties involved in studying online learner collaboration because the online platform such as the wiki page histories may record the histories of editions, but they do not reveal the background stories of collaborations that are done on paper, over the phone, in messenger or other social media by the students, or the complications and challenges that the students face while communicating, collaborating and writing online from geographically remote places. Although the qualitative data derived from the questionnaires and discussions in the present study revealed positive learner attitudes to wiki-based writing, their performance in the wikis did not reflect what Elabdali and Arnold (2020, p. 5) term 'equality and mutuality'. The wiki archives do not show co-construction of texts in terms of initiating talks, taking mutual decisions or co-editing by the students. The students did not comment on other group's writing, nor did they equally share the writing task among/between peers. They demonstrated mostly dominant/passive relations because except for the prewriting steps, drafting and editing were completed by the same student. Storch (2002) argues that the collaborative and expert/novice patterns of learner interactions facilitate higher peer collaboration and individual development than the dominant/dominant and dominant/passive groups. Recent studies on face-to-face and computer-mediated writing suggest that the mode of communication impacts learner collaboration (Rouhshad & Storch, 2016; Rouhshad, Wigglesworth & Storch, 2016). The learners in Rouhshad and Storch's (2016) study, for example, were more collaborative in the face-to-face mode than in the Google doc writing platform.

The learner behaviours in the present study can be interpreted as an outcome of their orientation to a new culture of online and remote education against their mental and technological readiness, which they overcame with the help of their limited smartphone technology, self-motivation, friends and relatives. Similar to the observation made by Wheeler et al. (2008), the students in the present study identified the limitations of asynchronous tools like wikis for simultaneous writing/editing on the same pages. The mobile internet cost and instability further complicated their

online collaboration. The 2020–2021 fiscal year budget ‘proposed a 5% hike in the supplementary duty (SD) on mobile phone services—voice and data’ (Dhaka Tribune, 11 June 2020). Thorndike (1913), the first educational psychologist, argued a hundred years ago that successful education must fulfil the first ‘law of readiness’, which means that learners should be physically and psychologically prepared and motivated to undertake education in a given situation. Although Thorndike’s theory was behaviourist in nature, the law of readiness provides an important precondition in any pedagogical theory or approach because learners’ readiness functions as a driving force for effective learning.

The lack of readiness, gender impacts, remote geographic locations and asynchronous and smartphone-incompatible wiki features caused the emergence of forced or voluntary group leaders who posted their writing in wikis on behalf of their group. These students showed their adoption of coping and face-saving strategies for both self and group by not avoiding the task or cost of writing in the wiki on the pretext of technological or sociocultural barriers. It is possible that some of the non-writer members would be unwilling to collaborate even in a physical class. Studies on student interaction in both face-to-face and wiki collaboration (Elabdali & Arnold, 2020; Storch, 2002) reveal that some students are more motivated to cooperate than others. This shows that learners’ collaborative behaviours in online platforms do not vary much from traditional face-to-face collaboration because self-motivated students take up the stage in both cases. Learners’ preferences, as noted by Wheeler et al. (2008), might have also impacted learner motivation to online collaboration because some learners may not like to work in groups or share their writing publicly.

Considering the positive learner perceptions of wikis in the present study, it may be argued that wikis will be very useful in the post-pandemic times in the context of Bangladesh. One of the major benefits is saving class time and space constraints. Teachers may find wikis resourceful because of the scope of creating and linking pages as needed, sharing materials, tracking group performance and individual development, practicing peer feedback, giving detailed teacher feedback, which are difficult to implement in face-to-face teaching due to large class size, time constraints and poor logistics. Additionally, wikis permanently record student writing and revisions as e-portfolios for the advantage of both teachers and learners.

The findings suggest that learners will embrace blended writing with greater enthusiasm and efforts in onsite classes if they are trained on ICT skills and provided with computers and internet facilities in the computer labs of the departments, institutions or dormitories. The availability of computers will solve the problems of their limited smartphone technologies. Free and stable internet facilities will save the internet cost. Initiatives by the government and the mobile phone companies for stable and cost-effective internet services can reduce learners’ sociocultural barriers and ensure equity because the female and the financially challenged students will not be deprived of connectivity regardless of the location of their residence.

(Pb)wiki’s authorial body and/or smartphone producers can take joint initiatives to enhance the smartphone-compatible features of wiki/web pages. Other wikis, such as Zohowiki, which were found effective in Nami and Marandi’s (2013) study because of ‘the simple edit format and the higher loading speed’ (p. 6), can be

employed to evaluate their effectiveness in the Bangladeshi context. For simultaneous peer contribution, learners should be introduced to online meeting platforms such as Zoom and Google Meet, which they can use to share the screen of their devices while co-editing in the wikis.

For equal and mutual learner collaboration, wiki participation can be assessed as class performance, particularly in onsite teaching when all students can access computers and have stable connectivity. Also, students should be instructed to change leaders/writers for each assignment and give feedback to both self and other groups. The page histories and comment entries will help teachers to monitor. Finally, to avoid gender reservations, students may be given the freedom to choose same-gender group members or work individually, if needed.

Conclusion

This chapter explores the prospects and challenges of online collaborative writing and scaffolding in wikis from Bangladeshi EFL learners' perspectives in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings reveal positive learner perceptions of online collaboration which were motivated by the features of wiki platforms, including online word processing, multiple edits, visibility, transparency and hyperlinks, among many others. However, the findings also underscore the limitations of the novelty of online learning/writing tools, the high cost of internet connectivity, lack of advanced technological devices and competence and sociocultural barriers, revealing that our students need more training and logistic support to be technologically, financially and mentally well prepared for online writing, be it individually or collaboratively. Thus, the study reflects complex relations between learners' sociocultural, economic and geographic backgrounds and their web-based remote L2 learning.

The challenges of technological and financial barriers, smartphone usage of wikis and gender issues, as observed in this study, were not explored or reported in previous wiki-based studies, which may mean that those students were technologically privileged. Moreover, previous studies involved face-to-face classes/interactions at one or more levels. In this regard, the present study offers insightful data because the participating students were technologically disadvantaged and required to learn and write online for the first time in their life without face-to-face meeting with the teacher or group members.

For future applications of wikis, institutions and government should work to make online education in Bangladesh easy and cost-effective. Institutions can provide computer technologies and free internet/wifi connections in the classroom, library, labs and dormitories. The government can undertake online education policies to reduce the cost of internet services such as mobile data and ensure stable and strong connectivity for smooth online and remote learning. Wiki authorities and smartphone producers may consider increasing the compatibility of wiki software for smartphone usage.

For further studies, it would be interesting to explore wikis from teacher perspectives. Also, gender inequities and the emergence of group leaders could be examined in-depth to understand their reasons and impacts in long-term collaborations. Studies may also be conducted to investigate learner perceptions of web-based writing in the post-pandemic blended learning contexts.

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Chapter 15

Using Digital Tools to Enhance Student Engagement in Online Learning: An Action Research Study



Rumana Rafique

Abstract Although online learning in higher education (HE) is not new, the scope of online learning has not been explored enough in developing countries until the COVID-19 pandemic. Alongside inadequate facilities and resources, engaging students in online environments seems to pose a greater concern for tertiary-level teachers. Various strategies to engage online learners have been proposed, but only a few researchers have indicated the effect of such strategies on students' engagement in low-resourced contexts. This chapter reports on an action research study that utilized various digital tools such as Padlet, G Suite applications, features of Zoom and Google Classroom to foster student engagement in a course taught online over six months in a public university in Bangladesh. A teaching journal was kept by me to record my observations after each session which also acted as critical incidents for the study. To evaluate the action plan, the study elicited data from various sources: student feedback forms, observations recorded in my teaching journal, and data from semi-structured interviews with five participants selected purposively at the end of the teaching. Findings from the thematic analysis of each dataset revealed that the nature of the tools encouraged participation, interaction, and communication among students although technical issues and inadequate induction affected their engagement. The study made several recommendations regarding the affordances of these tools and the role that the institutions might play in implementing these tools in a low-resourced context like Bangladesh.

Keywords Online learning · Digital tools · Student engagement · Low-resourced context · Action research

Introduction

Students' lack of engagement in online learning has been frequently reported in the literature (Conrad & Donaldson, 2004; Czerkawski & Lyman, 2016), and various

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strategies of using digital technologies to enhance online engagement have been proposed. While engaging students in physical classes remains a challenge, engaging them online becomes even more challenging since online learning occurs at different times and spaces without a real sense of face-to-face interaction. The sudden transition to online learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic precipitated the challenge as many institutions which run mostly on-site were compelled to move to online instruction without proper preparation on the part of teachers, students as well as the institutions themselves. Besides, the teachers and students in the low-tech contexts that are less familiar with the use of digital technologies had to struggle hard due to the lack of proper training and skills to utilize digital technologies which are inevitable for online learning, be it synchronous or asynchronous.

Since the lockdown started around mid-March in 2020, the University of Dhaka in Bangladesh had to move to online learning like many other institutions in the country. There were concerns, discussions, and debates regarding this transition (Khan, Bashir, Basu & Uddin, 2020). Contextual factors such as access to the Internet, the unstable connection, and the cost of the Internet, among many, were reported to be major challenges to be dealt with. The lack of participation and responses from the students was also mentioned as a challenge which made it difficult to know how effective classes were in online environments (Khan et al., 2020). Although several private higher educational institutions (HEIs) in Bangladesh had been using virtual learning environments (VLEs) and various Web 2.0 tools even before the pandemic, many public HEIs in the country were not prepared to use such technologies without adequate resources, training, and preparation. Research in the above-mentioned contexts (e.g. Chowdhury, Arefin & Rahman, 2018; Mahmuda, 2016) seems to validate the assumption that teachers and students are not always aware of the prospects of technology-enhanced learning and its pedagogical implementation due to what Mishra and Koehler (2006) call a lack of technological-pedagogical content knowledge (TPACK).

Recent research (Hoq, 2020; Oyedotun, 2020) has emphasized the multifaceted benefits of the use of technologies in online classes and offered various strategies to employ in online learning environments. However, there has been little research into the use of digital technologies and their effects on student engagement in the Bangladeshi context. Available studies reported mostly on the constraints of online learning (e.g. Nusrat, 2021; Shrestha, Haque, Dawadi & Giri, 2021) and a planned implementation and evaluation of using digital technologies (Munni & Hasan, 2020). This gap in research necessitated investigation into the ways digital technologies can be utilized in low-resource contexts to enhance student engagement in online learning. The present action research study was therefore designed to address this gap by focusing on the use of digital tools and their roles in fostering students' online engagement.

Objectives of the Study

My interest in this current action research study was piqued by frequent discussions with colleagues on the lack of student engagement in online classes. I planned to

utilize the existing technologies to carefully design activities considering the pedagogical and contextual aspects. In this action research study, I explored the use of digital technologies in online learning and evaluated if the pedagogical implementation of these tools can enhance students' participation, interaction, and collaboration in both synchronous and asynchronous learning. The study thus examines the affordances of various online tools and platforms to enhance students' engagement in low-tech higher education contexts. It also explores the challenges of using digital technologies in the context, and how these might affect students' online engagement. The study is driven by the following research questions:

1. How do technology-mediated activities support student engagement in online learning in Bangladeshi higher education?
2. What challenges do the students encounter in engaging in online learning using digital technologies?

Literature Review

The following section explains the models of online learning along with the key components of learner engagement in online classes and reports on the recent research which informed this action research study.

Online Learning and Emergency Remote Teaching

Online learning (OL), also known as 'e-learning', refers to the teaching and learning online where interaction between learners and the instructor is mediated by technology and the design of a learning environment (Aguilera-Hermida, 2020). Although emergency remote teaching (ERT) takes the form of online learning, online learning has its long tradition in distance education and suggests an informed understanding of the design of learning spaces and content to facilitate teaching and learning. In contrast, ERT is a "temporary shift to an alternative delivery mode" leading to a quick and readily available "instruction and instructional support" (Hodges, Moore, Lockee, Trust & Bond, 2020) which may occur without pre-plan and design of instructional materials. Both OL and ERT may consist of synchronous learning (in real time and space through video conferencing tools) and asynchronous learning (at different times, locations, and pace using learning management systems (LMSs).

Models of Online Learning

The existing models of online learning have frequently established the need for engaging online learners. These have also directed the design of this current study.

One of the notable works is Salmon's (2002) five-stage model of learning online through online networking that suggests that there should be a "structured developmental process" (p. 11) to support participants in online environments. The five stages in her model consist of access and motivation, online socialization, information exchange, knowledge construction, and development. Salmon further proposes that learning and interactivity increase when there is a balance of technical support and e-moderating at each stage.

Garrison, Anderson, and Archer's (2000) 'community of learning' model also confirmed the value of using technologies that are "pedagogically and structurally modelled" (Anderson, 2004, p. 278). They referred to creating a cognitive, social, and teaching presence for deep and meaningful learning in online environments. Whereas cognitive presence supports the development of critical thinking skills around content, social presence refers to the establishment of a learning environment that transcends a sense of trust, safety, and a degree of comfort among students. Teaching presence can be established by designing and organizing learning before and during the establishment of the learning community and devising and implementing interactive activities.

Key Components of Online Engagement

Effective online engagement requires certain key components. Engaged students are attributed to have positive attitudes toward their peers and be more active in their effort in learning. Interaction has a key role here as Muirhead (2004) argued that student-student interaction promotes inter- and intra-peer collaboration (p. 7). Since students may lack "self-monitoring skills required for the online environment" (p. 8), they need more academic and peer support to excel academically. The role of online educators is also crucial because they help learners become self-directed and more active in learning. In a similar vein, Czerkawski and Lyman (2016) proposed an instructional design framework to foster students' online engagement which includes performing needs analysis, defining instructional goals and objectives, and developing learning environments. Similarly, Anderson (2004) proposed building a community of learners in an online environment where a sense of trust and safety exists between its participants.

Engaged learning has also been attributed to the notion of adult learning or 'andragogy' (Knowles, 1980) which considers adult learners to be "self-directed, autonomous, and desirous of an active learning environment" (Conrad & Donaldson, 2004, p. 4). The concept has frequently been linked to the works of learning theorists such as Vygotsky (1981) and Piaget (1969) who emphasized an individual's experience and collaboration with others in the process of learning. Precisely, Vygotsky's (1981) notion of the 'Zone of Proximal Development' (ZPD) considers 'social interaction' as the key element in the learning process where individuals learn better

in support of a more advanced peer. Similarly, Piaget's (1969) theory of 'constructivism' defines engaged learning as learning where peer-to-peer discussion results in more valuable learning outcomes.

Digital Technologies for Online Learning

Digital technologies are inevitable for online teaching and learning as it entails both synchronous and asynchronous modalities. Creating a virtual learning environment (VLE) using learning management systems (LMSs) such as Canvas, Blackboard, Google Classroom, and Edmodo is beneficial as these contain individualized student and staff entry portal, message board, discussion forums, sections for course information, timetables, and learning resources. Various collaborative technologies can support learning including G Suite applications such as Google Docs, Slides, Forms, Jamboard, Sites, and Blogger, Microsoft applications, and Web 2.0 tools such as Padlet, Nearpod, Stormboard, Socrative, and so on. Such technologies offer various features for participation and interaction between and among its users. In many platforms, embedding videos, audio clips, or external links provide access to a wide range of content and materials. Alongside, using wikis or blogging sites as LMS can be effective yet low-cost implementation (Bach, Haynes & Lewis-Smith, 2007).

Related Research

As mentioned previously, most recent research in low-tech contexts has focused on the challenges of online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic and has limited references to the nature of students' engagement. For instance, Hussein, Daoud, Alrabaiah & Badawi's (2020) study showed that students' learning was affected by distraction and reduced focus, heavy workload, problems with technology, and insufficient support from the instructors. Digital inequalities, access to resources and devices, and poor infrastructure are some of the challenges mentioned by Oyedotun (2020). Similar findings are noted in Hoq's (2020) study on e-learning in Saudi Arabia and Mannan, Parvej, Tabassum, and Ahmed's (2020) study in the higher education context of Bangladesh. Dutta and Smita's (2020) study confirmed the previous findings by reporting students' lack of motivation and decrease in study hours. However, a few studies (e.g. Amin & Sundari, 2020; Oyedotun, 2020) identified benefits of e-learning such as the opportunities to access a wide range of information through blogs, Web sites, and live cloud recordings of lectures which eventually led to personal and professional development and growth for students and the instructors. Although the studies offered various models of online learning indicating strategies to create an engaged learning environment, recent literature in the Bangladeshi context did not focus on the same and were rather limited to exploring various constraints of online learning in both pre- and during COVID-19 education (Mannan et al., 2020; Nusrat, 2021; Shrestha et al., 2021). Despite the fact that some

universities in Bangladesh do utilize technologies for teaching and learning, only Munni and Hasan (2020) reported on a planned implementation and evaluated how these can affect student engagement.

The current study thus addresses this gap in literature and further contributes to the literature on strategies for student engagement in online learning environments. The purpose of this action research study is to understand how various digital tools can be utilized in the tertiary online classrooms in Bangladesh despite existing constraints, and how such technology-mediated activities may affect students' engagement and overall learning experience.

Methodology

Context and Participants

From November 2020 to April 2021, I taught *Functional English* and *Academic Writing* online to 58 first-year students of Anthropology in a public university in Bangladesh. Since online learning in this context started in mid-March in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, these students were already familiar with the basic concepts of online learning and the required digital tools by the time I started teaching. I utilized Google Classroom as a learning management system (LMS) and Zoom video conferencing tool to conduct the synchronous classes. I further incorporated G Suite applications and other Web 2.0 tools to assign various activities. It is to note that the university provided access to a Zoom account known as 'BDRen Zoom' which enables teachers to schedule meetings for up to 300 participants and includes other features (e.g. 'breakout rooms', 'reactions', 'raise' and 'lower hand', 'take a break', etc.) except the 'Polls'.

Description of My Action Plan

Action research (AR) is a 'self-reflective, critical, and systematic approach' undertaken by teachers to explore their teaching context and improve the teaching/learning process (Burns, 2010, p. 2). Influenced by the practical benefits, I decided to conduct an action research study to explore the use of digital technologies in enhancing students' engagement in my online class. Although action research is flexible and can be conducted in many ways, I adopted Kemmis and McTaggart's (1988) action research cycle consisting of four steps: planning, action, observation, and reflection. Figure 15.1 illustrates my action research design:

Precisely, my first step in this study was to identify a research problem and then develop a plan of action to improve my teaching. I was concerned about the lack of student engagement in online learning. Based on literature and discussion with

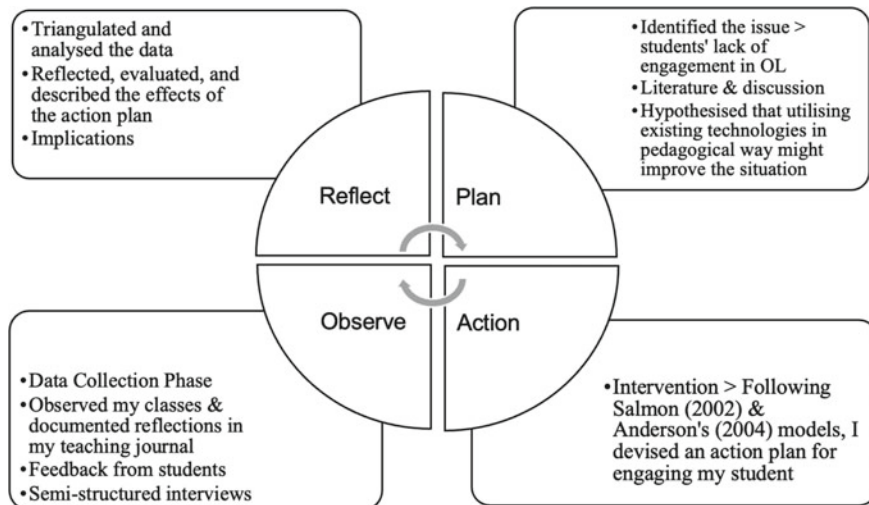


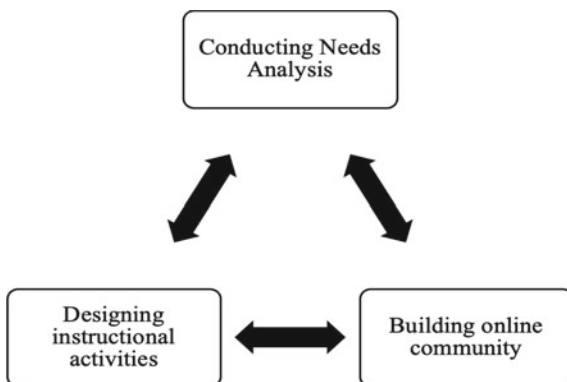
Fig. 15.1 Overview of my action research design

colleagues, I hypothesized that I could utilize the existing technologies to engage my learners. Throughout the intervention, I reflected on and recorded my observations in my teaching journal. Following Salmon’s (2002) and Anderson’s (2004) models, I devised a three-step action plan which included conducting a needs analysis, building an online community, and designing instructional activities (see Fig. 15.2).

Step 1: Conducting a Needs Analysis

My first step toward fostering student engagement was to conduct frequent needs analysis (NA). The purpose was to understand students’ needs about the course content and build a sense of trust. As I was teaching a course to develop students’ language-related skills, I tried to conduct the NA whenever I started teaching a new

Fig. 15.2 Steps in my action plan



skill. I used both Google Forms and the ‘Poll’ feature in Zoom depending on my access. The NA required anonymous responses on their personal experiences and preferences of learning. The idea was to see what level students were at concerning the language skills they were focusing on in the session. In the case of synchronously conducted NA, I made sure to close the ‘poll’ only after students responded and then shared the results with them immediately. I utilized my personal licensed version of Zoom to create ‘polls’ as the institutional Zoom account did not provide access to this feature.

Step 2: Building an Online Learning Community

As the second step in my intervention, I tried to create an online community in the asynchronous platform where students can feel confident and believe that their voices are equally important in this learning environment.

For instance, I used the Web 2.0 tool, Padlet (Fig. 15.3) to initiate interaction among students. Padlet is a platform where students can create and share colorful posts, insert pictures, emojis, links, and react and comment on each other’s posts. The purpose was to give my learners a sense of belonging as they read and interact with others through these posts. I initiated the activity by introducing myself in ‘Padlet Wall’ which worked as an ice breaker and gave students a model for the activity. The advantage of using ‘Padlet wall’ is that all posts appear side by side, and students can move their posts anywhere within the wall. Additionally, the ‘stream’ in Google Classroom was utilized where students shared their queries and feelings about learning and the course content.

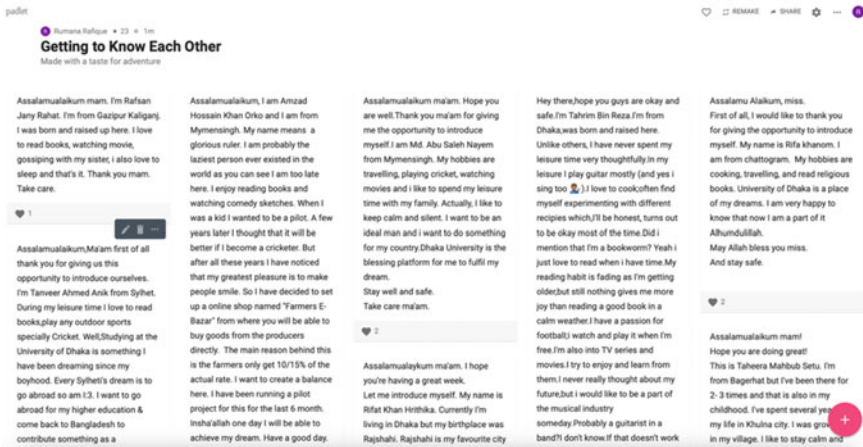


Fig. 15.3 Introducing activity in Padlet wall

Step 3: Designing Instructional Activities

My next step was to design activities that require students’ active participation and interaction. I tried to design both collaborative and individual activities using tools that are embedded in the platforms we were using.

Collaborative Activities

One of the collaborative activities was a speaking task where students were assigned in ‘breakout rooms’ in Zoom and asked to speak and share ideas during the synchronous session. The activity required them to nominate one member from the group who would be the spokesperson when they re-join the main session from their breakout rooms. The purpose was to ensure equal participation as students were reluctant to speak up during the earlier live sessions.

Besides, Google Jamboard provided a space for brainstorming ideas by posting sticky notes, inserting images or audio clips, and writing texts. It was part of a ‘pre-writing activity’ where each group was assigned with a Jamboard to work collaboratively and write down their ideas regarding a topic (Fig. 15.4). Then, Google Docs was used for group writing activities (Fig. 15.4). The purpose was twofold: to encourage writing practice through students’ anonymous inputs and to give them group feedback.

Individual Activities

Individual activities were assigned using the embedded features of Zoom and Google Classroom. For instance, students were encouraged to use the ‘annotate’ feature in Zoom’s Whiteboard (Fig. 15.5) during the synchronous sessions. The aim was to encourage students to participate in ongoing discussions if they feel hesitant to speak publicly. The ‘Chat’ feature in Zoom (Fig. 15.5) also provided opportunities for students to participate in the class discussion or complete activities on their own. Further, the ‘question–answer’ feature of Google Classroom was employed

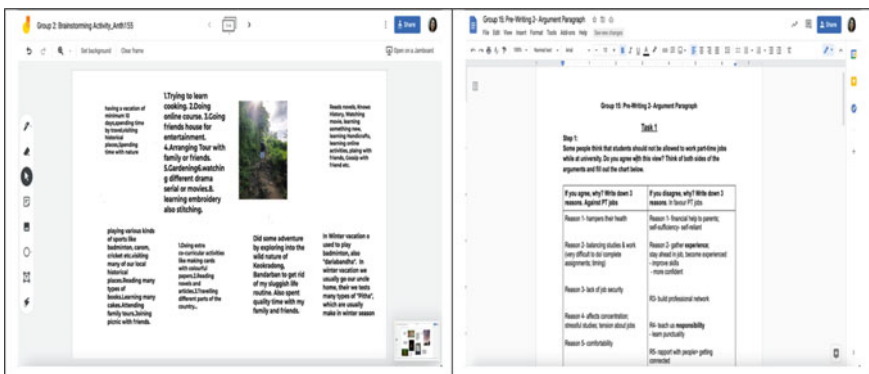


Fig. 15.4 Brainstorming activity in Google Jamboard (left) and collaborative writing in Google Doc (right)

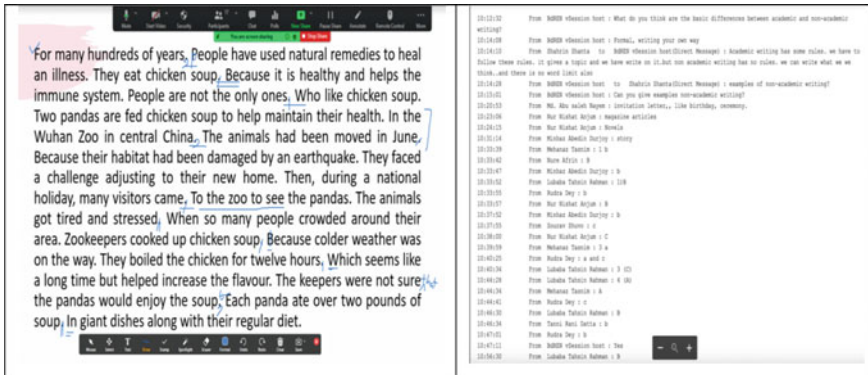


Fig. 15.5 ‘Annotate’ feature in Zoom’s whiteboard (left) and ‘chat’ option in Zoom (right)

asynchronously before teaching a particular content to elicit individual responses from students. Thus, various technologies were incorporated to design instructional activities and create a sense of trust and belongingness among students.

Data Collection

Data were gathered from three sources for the purposes of triangulation (Burns, 2010). These include students’ feedback, observations recorded in my teaching journal, and semi-structured interviews with five students.

First, although I collected students’ feedback after each class, I only used data that are relevant to answer the research questions. The feedback forms were designed in Google Forms using similar open-ended questions which required anonymous responses. Student feedback on completing individual activities using Padlet, ‘chat’ and ‘annotate’ in Zoom, ‘question–answer’ in Google Classroom, and collaborative activities using Google Doc, Google Jamboard, and ‘breakout rooms’ were utilized as the potential data for the study. Second, throughout the intervention, I reflected on my experience and recorded observations in my teaching journal which were used as data for this study. I used a flexible approach including making both paper-based and computer-based dated entries. To cross-check the findings, semi-structured interviews (SSI) containing both open and close-ended questions (Mann, 2016) with five students were conducted using Zoom at the end of the teaching term. The sampling was done purposefully and conveniently. Each online interview lasted approximately 45 min although the time and date of the interview varied depending on individual participants. Ethical guidelines were also followed including informing participants about the requirements and purpose of the study, receiving their consent, using pseudonyms and maintaining confidentiality, and audio recording the interview.

Data Analysis

Since all three sources of data elicited qualitative responses, I employed thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) to analyze each set of data. First, to analyze responses from the feedback forms, I used ‘descriptive’ and ‘value coding’ to identify students’ experience of engaging in tech-mediated learning (Saldaña, 2013). I tried to find similar patterns and devised themes to answer the research questions. Similarly, to analyze my teaching journal, I reread my entries to avoid distorting the data being an ‘insider’, and therefore, coded them to find similar patterns and themes employing ‘descriptive’ and ‘value coding’. Finally, I transcribed the data obtained from the SSI using a transcribing software called ‘Otter’. The data were analyzed employing thematic analysis with the aid of ‘in vivo’ and ‘value coding’. It is to note that I used ‘NVivo’ software to devise relevant codes from each dataset which were further revised to avoid any discrepancies.

Results

Research Question 1

The first research question explored if technology-mediated activities supported student engagement in online learning. The data revealed evidence of increased engagement which have been collated under three themes (see Table 15.1).

Theme 1: Increased Participation

The findings suggested that students were enthusiastic about participating in some of the activities because they felt they had a ‘voice’ in the class. For instance, student B in the interview referred to the use of feedback form after each session as a ‘good idea’ because she could talk about her problems and expectations from the class. Two students mentioned how using Padlet encouraged them to participate in an ongoing discussion. In the feedback form for Zoom, students referred to the ‘reactions’ feature including ‘raise hand’, ‘yes’, ‘no’, which they stated, “ensured equal participation, although virtually.” My teaching journal also recorded that students’ enthusiasm and participation was higher in the earlier sessions:

I got some very good ideas. They spent quite a good amount of time answering the questions. I think students enjoyed it because we had follow-up discussions regarding their answers to the poll, i.e. developing their speaking skills. (Nov 23, 2020)

Theme 2: Interaction and Collaboration

The second finding described the nature of student–teacher interaction and collaboration with peers. For instance, Student D and E mentioned in the interview that approaching the teacher and asking her questions in synchronous and asynchronous

Table 15.1 Codes and themes for research question 1

Codes			Themes
Semi-structured Interview Data	Feedback Forms	Teaching Journal	
1. Having a voice – feedback form 2. Expressing ideas easily – Padlet 3. Feedback form	1. Zoom features – ‘reactions’	1. Higher participation in earlier sessions	Increased Participation
1. Teacher-student interaction 2. Consulting group members for doing an activity	1. Teacher-student interaction 2. Student-student interaction 3. Discuss with peers about content	1. Get to know others - Padlet	
1. New experience – learning to use technologies 2. Relaxed environment	1. Interesting and fun activities 2. Better learning about the content	1. Good learning experience	Enhanced Learning Experience

platforms were easier because of the ‘easy’ learning environment. The ‘chat’ in Zoom proved to be a helpful feature since “it was easier to communicate with the teacher and classmates” (Student A). Similar findings were reported in the feedback form as one commented about the Padlet activity, “*writing about us helped to discover ourselves newly and become familiar with our classmates.*” My journal entries also noted similar benefits:

They can also read other’s posts and comment on them. It’s a colourful platform. I think they’ll love to contribute here. I think this is the steppingstone for the classroom environment that I’m aiming to build. (Dec 8, 2020)

Another theme that emerged from the data from the SSIs and the feedback form was students’ collaboration with peers. One student in the feedback form stated about the Jamboard activity, “*it was confusing at the beginning but was much interesting at the same time.*” Seven of them reported in the feedback form of consulting their group members before contributing their ideas to the Jamboard. However, students in the SSI seemed to appreciate collaborating in breakout rooms more:

I think through breakout room activity I could interact and collaborate with my classmates more, (Student A)

I don’t talk much with my classmates, but this activity helped me talk more with my classmates and contribute to the group work. (Student C)

Theme 3: Enhanced Learning Experience

The findings also revealed students' realization of an enhanced learning experience using different technologies. Students in the SSIs mentioned that the activities they did in both synchronous and asynchronous sessions using 'polls', 'Breakout rooms', and 'Google Jamboard' helped them learn better about the content. For instance, student B stated, "*I enjoyed the activities because these were a bit different and interesting, also fun*". The feedback form expressed similar findings as there were various references to 'fun', 'enjoyable', and 'flexible learning atmosphere' and how their knowledge of a particular content increased by sharing ideas with peers. In my teaching journal, I recorded similar observations as I wrote,

Students seemed to have a good learning experience because they are really taking the time to respond to other's queries in the GC. (Jan 20, 2020)

Research Question 2

The second research question explored the challenges students faced while engaging in online learning using digital technologies. Relevant findings were gathered under three broader themes (see Table 15.2).

Theme 1: Technical Issues

One of the themes frequently reported in both SSIs and feedback forms were the technical issues during attending the synchronous sessions. For instance, student C reported "missed the activity" due to getting disconnected during the speaking activity in the breakout rooms. Although many students in the feedback forms reported residing in the rural areas as reasons for poor network and unstable connection, two students in the SSIs mentioned residing in urban areas and encountering network issues. Similarly, in my teaching journal, I referred to getting disconnected many times in the middle of the synchronous sessions leading to the cancellation of the class.

Theme 2: Configuration of Devices

Another challenge students reported was the low configuration of their electronic devices. As one mentioned in the feedback form, "*some difficulties were doing some activities because I was using a mobile phone*" although the student did not mention the type of difficulties they faced. Another student mentioned in the interview that using the 'annotate' feature in Zoom was 'difficult' as she joined the session from her mobile. Although she could see the features under the 'annotate' option, she could not use any of them from her mobile. This aspect was also reflected in my journal as I mentioned not being able to incorporate interactive activities using extended tools in synchronous sessions assuming that shifting browsers would be problematic because the majority of the students used the 'direct link' from their mobile phones to attend the synchronous sessions.

Table 15.2 Codes and themes for research question 2

Codes			Themes
Semi-structured Interview Data	Feedback Forms	Teaching Journal	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Technical glitches 2. Poor network in rural areas 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Internet connection 2. Network problem 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Slow internet connection 2. Network issues 	Technical Issues
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Access to devices 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Low-configured devices 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Student's access to devices 2. Limited features of institutionally available devices 	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Comfortability of using technologies – a new experience 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Not understanding how to use certain tools 2. Lack of adequate tutorials 		Inadequate Tutorials on Technology Tools

Theme 3: Inadequate Tutorials

The third difficulty students faced was the lack of tutorials on using the technologies. Two students mentioned in the feedback forms their discomfort in doing some of the activities because these required them to use technologies which was a new experience for them. Likewise, some students reported in the feedback forms that they needed more tutorials on using technologies as they were not familiar with them. The same was shared by another student who was unsure about the instructions and how to do the activity although he thought he enjoyed it later.

Discussion

This study aimed to investigate the affordances of digital tools in supporting students' online engagement. Data gathered from the SSIs and feedback forms seem to cohere with my observations recorded in the teaching journal.

Overall, the findings revealed students' positive attitudes toward online participation, interaction, and collaboration. This is different from the recent research done on online learning which mostly reported lesser participation, the frustration of students, and distractions during online learning (Dutta & Smita, 2020; Hussein et al., 2020). The reason for such difference might be that students had opportunities to engage in learning differently compared to their previous experiences. It might be safe to assume that students needed this kind of online engagement particularly during the time of pandemic as they were detached from their peers and teachers due to the closure of face-to-face classes. The students reported of enhanced online learning experience which aligns with the proposed framework of Czerkawski and Lyman (2016). Further, the finding that they learned new things through their overall use of technologies seems to support Oyedotun's (2020) findings which affirmed that engaging in online learning led to personal development and growth of students. This can be interpreted in line with Knowles' (1980) idea of 'adult learning' which suggests that adult learners learn better when they take responsibility for their learning. It might be assumed that the activities using digital technologies required them to think, create, and contribute which led them to experience a better learning environment and enjoy participating and collaborating with peers.

Despite the positive experiences, the findings revealed certain constraints that seemed to affect students' online engagement. Technical aspects have been a key challenge which could be the reason for students' reduced participation in later tasks as Bach et al. (2007) affirmed, engagement might be affected due to the contextual factors (p. 42). The issue of unreliable network and connectivity has been reported in numerous findings including Mannan et al. (2020) and Hoq (2020), which seemed not only a contextual issue but also a concern in the low-resourced contexts worldwide. Moreover, Oyedotun's (2020) findings described how digital inequalities and even access to devices affected students' online participation. Since many students reside

in rural areas in the researched context, it may be assumed that they have limited access and connection to the Internet which seems to affect their active participation and interaction in synchronous sessions as well as responses in latter activities in asynchronous sessions. Further, students and the teacher's data regarding pre-tutorials of technologies seem to differ. One feasible interpretation could be that the teacher misinterpreted her students' needs for digital skills whereas ensuring digital skills in tech-mediated learning is a key element as affirmed by Hockly (2016). This mismatch in perception and the need for proper orientation are also reported in the studies by Hoq (2020) and Mannan et al. (2020).

Implications

The study explored the role of digital technologies in enhancing students' engagement in online learning. Although the action research study was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, the findings have implications for post-COVID online education. Following implications and recommendations can be drawn from the study.

First, although the study does not take an in-depth look at the nature of students' online interaction and its determining factors, incorporating a range of interactive activities may promote teacher–student and student–student interactions in online learning as Anderson (2004) and Conrad and Donaldson (2004) proposed. For low-resourced contexts like Bangladesh, pre-planning and pre-designing feasible and purposeful activities will lead to better learning. Since students' online engagement is a matter of concern irrespective of the format of online learning, activities that compel students to think creatively and critically can be designed for asynchronous sessions. This can be followed up with discussions in the synchronous sessions. The nature of student–student and student–teacher interactions in online platforms can be investigated further in the context.

Secondly, proper institutional support can ensure better online engagement for students in low-resourced contexts. The institutions need to ensure the even distribution of devices as well as standard bandwidth for the students to accomplish even minimum tasks for online learning. Institutions can also explore the licensed versions of some of the existing technologies and choose cost-effective and feasible ones that can be accessed by both students and teachers.

Alongside technological access, providing adequate orientation toward the use of technology tools is a key requirement for an engaging learning environment. It is to note that expectations from students to better engage in online platforms will only be justified when adequate time, and resources for preparation can be ensured to the students. Teachers need to remember that adequate support to students' basic digital skills will eventually increase students' confidence leading to increased online participation and interaction (Hockly, 2016).

Limitations of the Study

This action research study has several limitations. First, the study used a few of the students' feedback forms as potential data for the study. Since students' feedback was collected after each session, more feedback forms could have been utilized to cross-check the findings of the study. Generating quantitative data could have provided more validity to the study. Then, the study was not conducted within a longer period which may have provided less credible data. To conduct this action research study, I acted as an 'insider' in the researched context which may have left instances of subjective interpretation of the data despite various attempts undertaken for the objective analysis and interpretation. However, following Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2007), I tried to make informed decisions at various stages of the research and tried to maintain 'transparency' and 'validity' of the study by clarifying the purpose and reporting on the undertaken research processes to the reader.

Afterthoughts of My Action Plan

As action research is cyclical and conducted at multiple stages (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988), I aim to conduct the second stage of action research (see Fig. 15.6) informed by the findings, implications, and limitations of the current study.

To illustrate, for the second stage of my action research, I intend to provide more support to develop students' digital literacy skills. This can be accomplished by implementing small-scale practical activities around certain technologies that are related to both the course content and their literacy skills (Hockly, 2016). Secondly, I aim to incorporate more collaborative activities in the asynchronous sessions followed by a follow-up discussion in the synchronous sessions. This might provide students with ample opportunities to reflect on their learning experiences. The next action research may investigate students' online interaction incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data as interaction is a key component in improving online engagement.

Conclusion

To conclude, this chapter reported on an action research study investigating the role of digital technologies in enhancing students' engagement in online learning. Three sources of data (students' feedback, teacher's journal, and semi-structured interview) were used to evaluate the action plan. While the data indicated better student engagement in online learning, the gradual decrease of students' participation in later sessions posed a problem which demands further investigation. Typical infrastructural and technological factors also seemed to affect students' interaction and

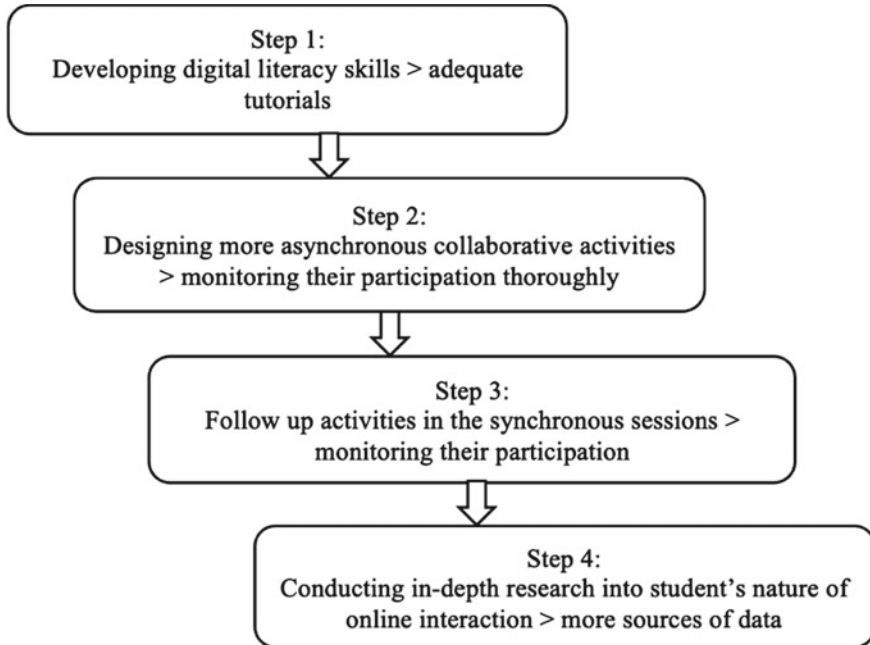


Fig. 15.6 Next stage of action research

participation online. The study recommended that proper orientation and institutional support should be provided to the stakeholders for online teaching and learning particularly during the pandemic. This will eventually accelerate students' engagement in online learning beyond post-COVID education.

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Part IV
ELT Practices

Chapter 16

Re-envisioning English Language Teaching in a Post-COVID World: Using Language Education for Sustainable Development



Joshua John Jodoin

Abstract Few aspects of our daily lives, from our local commutes to the prices of international products, are unaffected by the climate crisis. The climate crisis is complex and nuanced, and thus, we need students equipped with the knowledge to contribute future solutions and resilience. At present, English Language Teaching (ELT) has invested minimally to address this issue. However, the field can play an instrumental role in shaping our future citizenry through Language Education for Sustainable Development (LESD), which is a reimagining of the goals of ELT to include meaningful content that challenges student beliefs, values, and norms. This is especially critical in a post-pandemic world, where the crisis opens opportunities to teach languages differently by incorporating sustainable development (SD) as essential content. English, for better or for worse, plays an important role in local, regional, and international policies around the climate crisis, and the field of language teaching has a vital role in shaping these future leaders. This chapter introduces the new field of LESD, how LESD can be utilized in the language classroom, and how it can be used to re-envision ELT contexts in a post-COVID world. LESD offers a path to resilience in the face of future crisis.

Keywords Language education for sustainable development · Post-COVID · Climate crisis · English language teaching · Education for sustainable development · Sustainable development goals

Introduction

Shifts in economic, environmental, and social realms have historically opened the door to fundamental changes in society. At this moment, humanity is faced with a man-made deteriorating biosphere, which is understood as the phenomenon of global warming, and the COVID-19 global pandemic. Both crises are stretching the will of societies around the world. So, calls for fundamental changes to the infrastructures of

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our modern world are necessary if we believe that sustainable development (SD), or “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (Brundtland, 1987), is of utmost importance.

Like all fundamental shifts in society, the important work of adaptation, educating future leaders, and adopting new solutions to these challenges is already happening. One quintessential example is the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (United Nations, 2015), which is an action plan that targets 17 of the most pressing challenges to humanity (See Fig. 16.1). The SDGs act as a blueprint for how to integrate SD into all aspects of our lives culminating in 2030, where the ambition is that we find viable solutions for these challenges. This call by the United Nations has been adopted widely from the field of education to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives in local, national, and international realms. These initiatives vary widely, but visibility of the SDGs can often be found all around us.

In Japan, for instance, Hankyu Hanshin Holdings Corporation introduced trains that are decorated with the SDGs as part of their broader CSR initiatives. The company wishes to promote the SDGs, their use of renewable energy to power the trains, and the company’s dedication to providing safe, efficient, and forward-looking public transportation (See Fig. 16.2). Their efforts can be seen to reflect SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure), SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), and SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) to name a few. Another example is seen in a beer, Fat Tire’s Torched Earth beer, that purposefully tastes terrible to illustrate the idea that climate action is needed otherwise it will negatively affect beer ingredients in the future (New Belgium Brewing, 2021). This company’s efforts are clearly directed toward SDG 13 (Climate Action) and SDG 12 (Responsible



Fig. 16.1 Sustainable development goals (SDGs) (SDSN, 2020, p. 4)

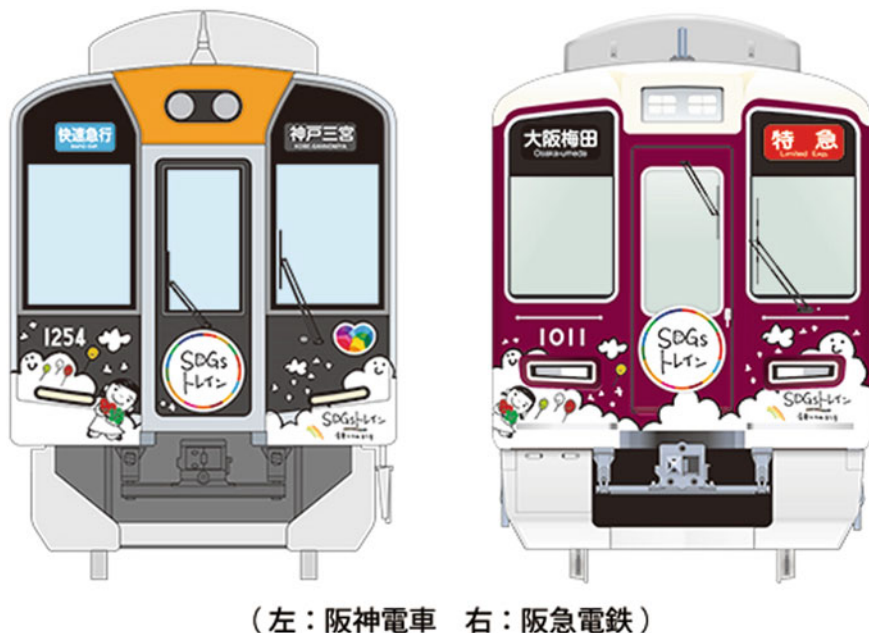


Fig. 16.2 Hankyu Hanshin Holdings CSR initiative (Hankyu Holdings, 2019)

Consumption and Production), among others. This overlap of the SDGs is an essential lesson of SD as these concepts are necessarily interconnected and multidisciplinary in nature; one cannot exist in isolation of the others.

In terms of SDG integration in education around the world, countless initiatives exist. For instance, Buong (2020) explores how the SDGs are being implemented in the University of Bahrain and the challenges of doing this in Higher Education. Kioupi and Voulvoulis (2020) have developed a tool for measuring European and UK university's potentials for achieving the SDGs, and the Citizen Platform for the SDGs Bangladesh (Rahman, 2020) has created a comprehensive assessment of how the SDGs are being implemented in Bangladesh with several case studies and a suggested way forward to each chapter. Furthermore, several recent wide-ranging reports have been published looking at ways to integrate Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) into educational institutions and its impacts (SDSN, 2020; UNESCO, 2019; Vaughter & Pham, 2020). What is clear is that there is work at both local levels (i.e. transformation of public transportation systems) and international levels (i.e. promotion of SDGs in our interconnected educational systems) to implement change in fundamental ways. So, where is the field of language education in this shift?

Language Education and the SDGs

There are several organizations and teachers that have been making in-roads into developing materials connected to the SDGs, such as the British Council and their recent endeavors to promote “Climate Action in Language Education” through online teaching materials and a course for educators (British Council, 2020). Furthermore, there are many ELT materials, which focus on global issues, but these materials often simply add content from the SDGs or environmental issues without challenging student beliefs, showing interconnections between topics, or offering students ample opportunities for critical thinking (Jodoin & Singer, 2020). In other words, much of the action around using SDG content in language education is simply using SDG-related content instead of fundamentally rethinking the outcomes and goals of ELT. Although these efforts should be applauded, language education, as a field of study, has a tremendous opportunity to fundamentally shift the way it understands our students as communicators and ambassadors for their cultures, societies, and nations on an international stage to combat global issues.

Reimagining Language Education

The unfortunate reality is that language education has been slow to adopt the SDGs and to fully embrace its role in engaging with the challenges the world currently faces. Like language education shifted focus during World War 2 to embrace the audio-lingual method as a response to the war crisis, LESD offers a reimagining of language education in the face of our current climate and COVID-19 crises. We need a new paradigm that considers the future local, national, and international world our students will live in and empowers them with the tools to deal with these new realities.

To better understand what this currently looks like, let us consider what the current paradigm of English Language Teaching (ELT) broadly views its role as. This way, we can better understand the possible routes language education can navigate to meet the current challenge. ELT definitions vary broadly, but, in general, a language teachers’ main job, according to Nation (2013, pp. 35–37), is to apply the following four strands in their classrooms:

1. Input from listening and reading;
2. Learning from output in the form of speaking and writing;
3. Deliberate language study, and
4. Fluency development.

This vision of language education can be summarized in Fig. 16.3. All four elements of the strands contribute to a future proficient language user at some future point in time. Of course, this process is dynamic and considers several complexities like motivation and culture, but it can be used as a basic model of the current paradigm

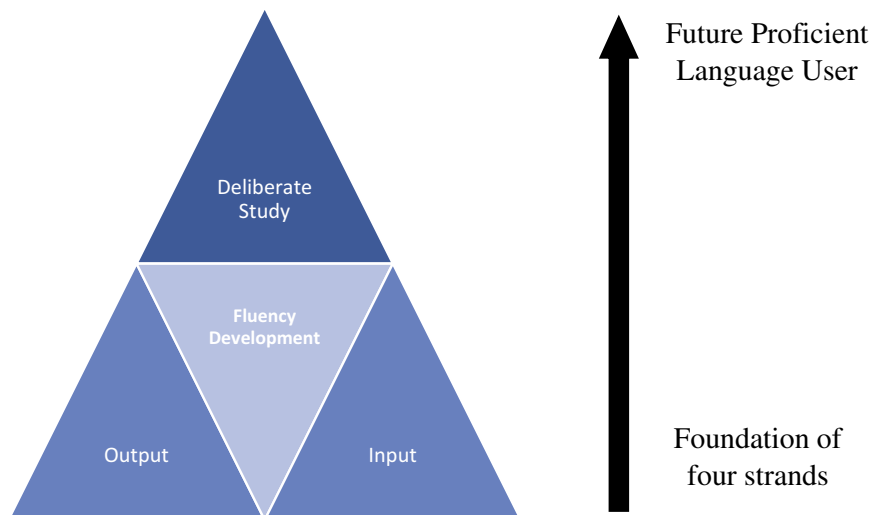


Fig. 16.3 English language teaching. Adapted from Nation (2013)

of ELT. This model has served the ELT world and language learners well if creating proficient language users is the end goal.

What is principally missing from this model, however, is that it does not reflect the importance of content (as meaningful input) and the future goal of equipping students with the tools to engage with global issues. For instance, our students may live in a world that is significantly hotter in terms of global climate, and this has the potential to be enormously consequential for them. The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) in their latest report (2021) predicts that the “annual mean global (land and sea) near-surface temperature is likely to be at least 1 °C warmer than pre-industrial levels (defined as the average over the years 1850–1900) in each of the coming 5 years and is very likely to be within the range 0.9–1.8 °C.” What this means is that the hard-line number of a 1.5 °C increase in global temperatures compared to pre-industrial levels has about a 40% chance of occurring over the next 5 years. This is devastating, especially to some of the poorest nations of the world who may not have the tools and resources to deal with the repercussions. Increased chances of extreme weather events will become a reality along with many other interconnected consequences such as political unrest, social instability, and economic hardships. Being able to ask for directions to the nearest supermarket in English is not going to be very useful in these uncomfortable circumstances.

ELT and other language education fields have a real opportunity to reimagine how the language that we teach can be used to empower future leaders. With increasing temperatures on land and in the ocean, there is a need, more than ever, to have citizens that can communicate their ideas broadly in common languages like English as well as understand the interconnectedness and complexity of global issues like climate change. This is where our current model of ELT needs to be fundamentally altered.

We need to lean heavily on the current ELT model (see Fig. 16.3) to help our students communicate their ideas in effective ways, but the goal of using meaningful content needs to be included so that we can support our students, as future citizens, to be a part of the solutions and resilience in the face of global problems.

Language Education for Sustainable Development

LESD is a fundamental rethinking of how we teach languages with the two specific aims of: (1) providing tools to our students to communicate their ideas broadly and (2) facilitating an understanding of the complexity and interrelatedness of challenging global issues for our students. At its heart is the integration of ELT and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) to reach these aims. ESD “empowers learners to take informed decisions and responsible actions for environmental integrity, economic viability and a just society for present and future generations” (UNESCO, 2017, p. 7). ESD has a large body of literature that promotes and fosters students’ construction of environmental knowledge, values, beliefs, and norms, required for positive societal transformation (UNESCO, 2014). Furthermore, ESD is transformational in nature and promotes educational experiences that reinforce an interlinked connection between humans and the natural world. Unlike many of the current attempts to sprinkle elements of the SDGs into the language classroom, LESD seeks to fundamentally rethink the aims of what we do as language educators, which entails a rethinking of a language program’s goals and objectives. Using the fundamentals from ESD, LESD seeks to provide language educators with a new way to envision their language classrooms.

LESD Theory

Figure 16.4 provides a redesigned framework for ELT from the ground up by integrating the SDGs as essential meaningful content through an ESD lens.

The LESD framework on the left side of Fig. 16.4 shows how ELT, as a language discipline, supported by meaningful content based on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), can elevate students’ environmental values, beliefs, and norms using ESD integration. Essentially, language education, or the Language Teaching Discipline, and the SDGs provide the foundation for learning. If the goal is to have competent and proficient language users as well as having students that understand complexity and interrelatedness of challenging global issues, language education must adopt meaningful content that challenges student values, beliefs, and norms (VBN) around SDG-related topics. The VBN model (Bronfman, Cisternas, López-Vázquez, de la Maza, & Oyanedel, 2015) on the right side of Fig. 16.4 shows the progression or evolution, of understandings about the world around us. As one transitions through the different phases, they evolve their conceptions moving to the

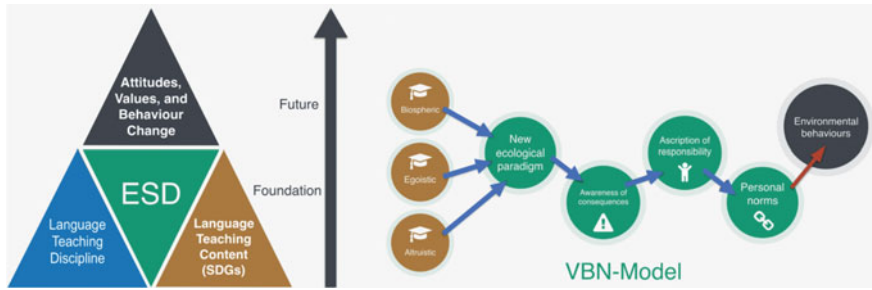


Fig. 16.4 LESD framework and the VBN model. *Source* Jodoin and Singer (2018); Bronfman, Cisternas, López-Vázquez, de la Maza, & Oyanedel, (2015)

right toward ‘environmental behaviors’. Through ESD best-practice, students can begin to develop their own sense of ‘Awareness of Consequences’, ‘Ascription of Responsibility’, and ‘Personal Norms’ on their way to living more in-line with their personal VBN or behavior changes in their future daily lives. It should be emphasized here that ‘behavior change’, although listed as the ultimate future state in LESD, is not prescribed in a course of study. ‘Behavior change’ is something that organically arises through the process of challenging student VBNs, or what is known in language education as ‘critical thinking’.

The two images from Fig. 16.4, the triangle on the left and the circles on the right, are connected in important ways to show the power of LESD beyond simply teaching SDG content. The bottom corner triangles on the left side of Fig. 16.4 are demonstrative of ‘Language Teaching Content’ using the SDGs and the development of skills from the ‘Language Teaching Discipline’. These bottom corner triangles correspond to the circles on the right side of Fig. 16.4 as the biospheric, the egoistic, and the altruistic, or what is known as ‘the New Ecological Paradigm’, or NEP. The NEP is representative of basic knowledge understandings of the natural world and the ability to communicate these ideas through language skills. It should be noted that ‘Language Teaching Discipline’ encompasses the four strands as discussed in Fig. 16.3. ESD is represented by the middle triangle on the left side of Fig. 16.4 and the middle circles on the right side of Fig. 16.4 as represented by ‘Awareness of Consequence’, ‘Ascription of Responsibility’, and ‘Personal Norms’. ESD is essential to the progression from basic knowledge understandings of SDG content represented by the NEP into more meaningful connections as represented by an awareness of consequence, ascription of responsibility, and an ability to express norms around issues. This part of the LESD framework is essential to challenge student values, beliefs, and norms, or, in language education speak, to provide opportunities for critical thinking. Lastly, the top triangle on the left side of Fig. 16.4 and the right most circle on the right side of Fig. 16.4 is representative of the state of being in the world after a student has seriously considered SDG content alongside language learning or their behaviors and actions as future citizens. The hope is that students who experience LESD can live a much more informed life where their actions reflect their personal values, beliefs,

and norms at some future time. It should be noted that behavior change is never the goal of a course of study and is never assessed under the LESD framework. Behavior changes, as represented by actions in the world, are the final steps in a long and personal process. LESD focusses on the best ways to offer students' opportunities to interact with challenging and meaningful content, like the SDGs, and have students reflect on their own VBNs as part of this process. Ideally, students will back up their values, beliefs, and norms with actions in the world at some future time.

Indispensable to ESD is a series of critical thinking steps or challenging VBNs. LESD envisions a scenario where students acquire knowledge and language skills, and then, use this knowledge and language skill to better understand their own personal values, beliefs, and norms about the world around them. This signifies a paradigm shift in thinking for language educators as it entails a central emphasis on critical thinking informed by ESD. For instance, a unit on plastic use in consumer products linked to SDG 12 (Fig. 16.1) would raise student awareness of what happens to the plastic they throw away (i.e. awareness of consequences) and would offer students different perspectives as to who is responsible for that plastic (i.e. ascription of responsibility). Lastly, students are challenged about what they think should happen in their communities, countries, and internationally with regards to plastic waste (i.e. personal norms). Moreover, the LESD framework can be structured in such a way that issues, like plastic waste, are recycled within a course of study as well as connected with other related topics like solutions to plastic waste, how plastic waste can affect human health, or how plastic waste is dealt with through policy at regional, national, and international levels. Again, like the SDGs, LESD envisions content as interconnected and multidisciplinary, so these connections are indispensable and offer students additional language learning opportunities for recycling sentence structures or revisiting grammar, for instance.

Through LESD, students gain the opportunity to learn about the SDGs, possible solutions, and how these solutions are applied at the local, national, and global levels (i.e. input). Furthermore, students gain an opportunity to share what they have discovered in meaningful ways (i.e. output), whether through presentations, discussions, or writing. Content units in an LESD course can be integrated in a way that allows for students to recycle their understandings of topics as well as be challenged to apply their knowledge to other related topics. Thus, students will come away with a deeper understanding of SDG-related topics and be able to apply their knowledge more widely, which are skills transferable to other disciplines and domains of inquiry. In other words, LESD does not just aid students in the discipline of language teaching or Sustainable Development Goals knowledge, but these skills can then be broadly applied to other courses of study in their first language (L1).

LESD has been informed by other fields or inquiry of research such as Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), Global Issues in Language Education, English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI), and intercultural communication. LESD sets itself apart from language education fields in a couple of fundamental ways:

1. LESD promotes integrating sustainable development (SD) into the language classroom. Global issues, for instance, are much broader in its definition of a

global issue and do not canonize the areas of inquiry. LESD, on the other hand, seeks to use only content from the current and future versions of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as these outline the most important issues to be solved in our modern world according to the United Nations (UN). Currently, there are 17 SDGs that will be promoted until 2030, as seen in Fig. 16.2.

2. LESD aims to see issues in dynamic, multifaceted, multidisciplinary, and interconnected ways, which plays a major role in how this content is taught and understood in the language classroom. In other words, topics are not seen as single isolated chapters in a language textbook, but rather dynamic, interconnected content that form an integrated curriculum. Furthermore, this approach, although challenging, can provide more opportunities to recycle, integrate, and build language learning through a course of study (Jodoin & Singer, 2018).
3. LESD seeks a holistic approach to integrating sustainable development. This means that the integration is scaffolded in ways that maximize opportunities to challenge student values, beliefs, and norms. Furthermore, LESD, as defined in this chapter, puts limitations on the content available for integration unlike CLIL, which focuses its attention on how *any* content is used in language education.
4. LESD has the explicit goal of empowerment for our students. Language education with sustainable development content knowledge, awareness, and synthesis is an empowering act that should benefit our students in their future lives and actions, especially considering global issues like pandemics or climate change. This ethos should remain central to the application of LESD.
5. LESD seeks to outline a research template where this change can be evidenced. LESD is not just about teaching, but also about evolving a field that can demonstrate its power for change. So, LESD encourages educators to do research.

SCOPE Framework of LESD

As mentioned above, LESD seeks to promote research in the field, and a SCOPE framework (see Table 16.1) has been developed to facilitate integration of LESD concepts in language classrooms. Ideally, ELT courses and curricula would be redesigned to accommodate the new goal of facilitating an understanding of the complexity and interrelatedness of global issues. However, this intensive redesign is unlikely or untenable for many language teachers or courses of study at this time. Hence, the SCOPE framework is a guideline for those interested in integrating LESD at all levels of revision—from a simple integration, or low LESD, to a more thorough integration into a course, syllabus, or entire program of study, or high LESD. The SCOPE framework can be seen as the essential elements that are to be integrated into a language program to be considered an application of LESD. The more elements of the SCOPE framework that are integrated, the higher along the LESD spectrum a course, syllabus, or program, is applying LESD.

The first part of the SCOPE framework is student-centeredness. As LESD seeks to challenge student values, beliefs, and norms (VBNs) about their place in the world,

Table 16.1 SCOPE framework: essential elements of an LESD course

Student centered	Students are empowered through student-led research, topics, and activities
Critical thinking	Classroom activities are centered around challenging student values, beliefs, and norms (VBNs) on global issues
Offer feedback	Opportunities are present for self, peer, and teacher feedback
Practice and demonstrate	Students present their work in poster, PowerPoint, or discussion-style presentations
Educate others	Opportunities are created so that students can offer their work to a larger audience at their schools or in their communities

student-centered curriculum is essential. The ideas of student centeredness are rooted in educational approaches by Dewey (1916), Piaget (1954), and Vygotsky (1978) where students must engage directly with the material in the classroom, and it must be reflective of a student's own experiences with the world. Student centeredness is also a recurring theme in recent ELT literature (Juliaty, Yuyun, Pattiwael & Natalia Mau, 2019; Lee & Hannafin, 2016; Soleimani, 2020) and ESD literature (Eilam & Trop, 2010; Ssossé, Wagner & Hopper, 2021).

The second part of the SCOPE framework is Critical Thinking or challenging student VBNs on global issues. For students to engage critically with the SDGs, they must be given opportunities to express their own ideas about the world around them informed by meaningful content. The VBN model in Fig. 16.4 outlines how this critical engagement can eventually lead to a change in behavior in-line with a student's values, beliefs, and norms. Critical thinking is a well-worn path in language education circles, which has a long history in educational literature (Mason, 2007). Furthermore, links between critical thinking and improved language proficiency are substantial in the literature (Fahim & Sa'eepour, 2011; Rezaei, Derakhshan, & Bagherkazemi, 2011; Yang & Gamble, 2013). ESD has also been linked to critical thinking as represented by many connected concepts and frameworks such as futures thinking, interdisciplinary thinking, systemic thinking, ecoliteracy, collaboration, active learning, and participatory learning, to name a few (Tilbury & Wortman, 2004). For the purposes of understanding LESD, critical thinking or challenging VBNs can be thought of as conceptually interchangeable and necessary to a course of study.

The third part of the SCOPE framework is Offer Feedback. Research, theory, and application of feedback in language education are another well-established field. The literature supports the use of feedback in the language classroom as a positive force for language acquisition although it is complex and hard to quantify (Lightbown & Spada, 1990; Mackey, 2006; Nassaji & Kartchava, 2017). Having modes of peer, self, and teacher feedback built into a course is a way to raise awareness and steer a student toward corrective behaviors. In the field of ESD, feedback is not well studied, but forms of feedback exist and are often intertwined with critical thinking, or challenging VBNs. In this way, peer feedback after a presentation or doing a carbon footprint analysis of your life can be seen as ways to offer feedback in

the classroom. LESD aims to further develop this area of research to explore what feedback looks like through an ESD lens in the language classroom.

The fourth part of the SCOPE framework is Practice and Demonstrate, and the last part of the SCOPE framework is Educate Others. These last two sections of the SCOPE framework may be newer to language teachers. In the language classroom, it is often the case that we have our students present their research in a presentation class or offer their opinions in a discussion class. However, LESD envisions finding wider audiences to present and discuss with as well as a more student-centered approach to demonstrating student knowledge. For instance, a student that learns about plastic waste has gained some meaningful knowledge about the issues surrounding the problem. LESD looks to keep this meaningful knowledge active by demonstrating this knowledge to a wider audience in the university, the community, or more broadly through different social media, like podcasts or YouTube videos. Moreover, this meaningful knowledge will grow along the evolution of the LESD framework (Fig. 16.4) as a student demonstrates the knowledge in different social and media arenas through interactions with different audiences and the chance to build on each experience. Lastly, LESD is focused on linking and connecting ideas with other related content in meaningful ways. So, in a course of study, a student may first do a small presentation about the problems of plastic pollution to their class. The student will become familiar with the knowledge around the issue, which should challenge VBNs both within and through interactions with classmates. Then, a student could have another opportunity to present similar knowledge to their university community linking in another source of meaningful content, like SDG 3, Good Health and Well-Being (Fig. 16.1). Now, the student is further practicing their knowledge, demonstrating their expertise in the topic by interconnecting plastic pollution with human health, and educating others in a new broader-reaching arena. Overall, these two sections of the SCOPE framework are designed to give students opportunities to interact with meaningful content more deeply, through interconnectedness, practice, demonstration, and educating others about topics they have gained some comfort and expertise in. Essentially, this part of SCOPE is a reinforcement of the other three sections.

How Can LESD be Used to Re-envision Our ELT Contexts in a Post-COVID World?

At the time of writing this chapter, the world is still in the throes of the COVID-19 pandemic as variants continue to circulate and complicate the pathways to a semblance of normalcy in our day to day lives. Although vaccines have been an amazing tool to fight the pandemic, several places around the world remain without access to vaccines, and huge inequities exist, especially between the developed and developing world. According to OECD (2021), 1.5 billion students in 155 countries were locked out of school in 2020 due to the pandemic, which has exacerbated

inadequacies and inequalities in our school systems around the world. A crisis, like the pandemic, tends to inflame fragilities in our systems often falling heaviest on the poorest nations. According to the United Nations (2020, pp. 8–10), “an estimated 40% of the poorest countries failed to support learners during the COVID-19 crisis,” and this disruption will ripple out into other areas like food insecurity, economic instability, and violence against women and girls. Therefore, the SDGs, as a set of goals to deal with these major global fragilities, act as one part of an antidote to crises like this. The other part of the antidote is people who can understand the complexities and nuances of these issues and inject stability, strength, and resilience into these systems, especially in the developing world. As such, LESD aspires to develop individuals who not only understand the issues in meaningful ways but can also communicate these ideas broadly in an interchange of ideas, culture, and progress where the developing world sits alongside the developed world to combat this fragility.

In addition, global crises will happen again, but next time, we can be better prepared. Times of crisis can be transformed into opportunity as long as the lessons are learned. Thus, LESD poses a challenge to language education to broaden the goals to be more than just language proficiency. LESD calls on language educators to adopt an ethos of also offering our students tools to communicate their ideas broadly in local, national, and international forums with meaningful knowledge about global issues informed by the SDGs. Be that as it may, English remains the lingua franca of world politics, culture, and academia, so students that understand the complexity of SDG global issues and can communicate their ideas in common language mediums, like English, are a powerful force in the face of future crises and global issues, like climate change. LESD is an act of empowerment for our students, and this will serve the local, national, and international communities well in the future.

Language educators around the world can contribute to resilience in the face of crises like COVID-19 and climate change in three important ways. Firstly, they can reimagine the content they are using in their classrooms with the aim of challenging our student’s beliefs, values, and norms around critical global issues. Content is often considered an afterthought, or a means to teach a language item like a grammar point. This often results in content that is not engaging to our students and does little to help them understand the serious issues the world faces. Using the SDGs as a rich source for meaningful content is an important first step as we move back into the classroom after the pandemic. Secondly, as language educators, we are always looking for ways to offer our students opportunities to practice within our curriculums. The SDGs, and their interconnected, multidisciplinary nature, are abundant with intersections that allow for recycling and scaffolding of language points through relevant and timely content. The LESD SCOPE framework can be used as an instructional template for balancing meaningful content with effective language teaching. Lastly, language educators can share the important work and research they do in applying LESD. Restructuring the goals of language education, by taking into consideration the challenges the world currently faces, is not an easy task. The work of LESD integration into a class, a course, or an entire curriculum entails a significant amount of elbow grease and dedication, so language educators are encouraged to share their

work and help others build resilience in the post-COVID world together. Overall, COVID-19 has been a monumental challenge for students and teachers around the world, but the next crisis, whether that be new variants of the virus or climate change impacts, does not have to be so difficult. LESD is a powerful tool that can build resilience in the face of inevitable future crises, and language educators play a vital role in this re-envisioning of the ELT field.

Conclusion

Currently, the SDGs are being applied in many language education contexts, which is admirable and important work. This application is usually in the form of occasionally spreading a thin layer of honey (i.e. the SDGs) over bread (i.e. the language education discipline). Although this tastes better and looks, from the outside, to be doing the important work of teaching SDG content in the language classroom, the core is still bread and the taste of honey quickly fades. Thus, the importance of the content is lost in the process without repetition, integration, and proper scaffolding. LESD calls for a deeper rethinking about the way we make the bread so that everything is baked in together. If we can integrate ESD meaningfully into language education as LESD, we will produce a much stronger antidote when the next crisis hits in the form of informed and articulate citizenry that can communicate their ideas broadly with the fervour that comes with deeper understandings. The COVID-19 crisis will open doors to rethink and re-envision how we teach languages and, more importantly, what we want our future students to do with that language under the inevitable threat of future crises and disruption.

Similar to how climate change and the adoption of a carbon tax challenges the status quo for governments around the world, LESD and the ethos to teach meaningful content through the SDGs is a challenge to the status quo of language education. LESD, whether low LESD or high LESD, empowers our students to be stable, and resilient in the face of future crises and global fragilities.

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Chapter 17

Exploring Language Learning Attitudes Through Diaries



Anne McLellan Howard

Abstract This chapter presents the findings of a language learning diary project designed to promote autonomy and awareness among Japanese students training to be English teachers. The teacher trainees were intermediate learners of English studying in an English speaking environment, and they were grappling with difficult vocabulary and grammar as they learnt techniques and theories of language teaching. The project was conceived as a way to make the trainees aware of their own learning attitudes inside and outside of the classroom, and to increase their autonomy. I used my own language learning diary as a model for students and had them do a simple analysis. They then wrote a diary throughout the fifteen-week semester. At the end of the semester, after learning some basic concepts about motivation, anxiety, and willingness to communicate, the learners analyzed their own diaries in terms of these concepts. Through discussions and writing, students were able to see the variety of sources of motivation and anxiety in learning a foreign language as well as things that they tended to have in common. While students seemed to have gained a more nuanced understanding of some of the concepts, they had difficulty understanding others. Suggestions for revision of the project are discussed.

Keywords Language learning diaries · Student-led research · Motivation · Anxiety · Willingness to communicate

Introduction

In this chapter, I outline a project in which students kept a language learning diary and analyzed it for individual differences, specifically motivation, language learning anxiety, and willingness to communicate. The students were studying at a college in Japan where almost all classes were taught in English, and they were in the education program to obtain a license to teach English in junior high or high school. I kept a diary of my own language learning for a few weeks and gave it to the students as a

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model. The twenty students then kept their own diaries for one fifteen-week semester. At the end of the semester, I taught lessons on motivation, language anxiety, and willingness to communicate, and students analyzed their own diaries for evidence of their language attitudes with respect to these themes. Although the project was successful in many ways, I determined several things to be improved.

Knowing about their own individual differences and how these can affect language learning is beneficial for all students. Students can sometimes feel inadequate or ashamed of things such as waning levels of motivation or anxiety about speaking the target language. In my own context, in Japan, students tend to be unaware of individual differences. I wanted to give them the ability to understand their own language learning, and to make them more autonomous I wanted them to discover it themselves.

Using Journals with Language Learners

I began to think about doing this project after reading Casanave's (2012) study of her own learning of Japanese. Labeling herself a "dabbler," Casanave talks about her varied sources of motivation and demotivation over many years of informal Japanese study. Inspired by her, I initially began to keep a journal of my own study of Bangla (Bengali) with the idea of doing research on learning a less commonly taught language. However, I soon began to think I could use diaries as a way for students to learn more about their own language learning. I decided on motivation, anxiety, and willingness to communicate as appropriate themes for them to explore from their journals.

There are several diary studies about teachers or trainee teachers using diaries (e.g. Byrd, 2010; Casanave, 2011), but although most of the students are getting teaching licenses, and it is hoped that the journal experience might inform their teaching, this study is different in focus. The students are reflecting on their own language learning, and they positioned themselves as students for the most part. While they did consider the role of the teacher in their motivation or demotivation, they tended not to directly write about using this information in their own teaching. When diaries focus on language learners, they are used in language classes for various purposes. The literature, however, tends to focus on two streams: using journals to improve students' fluency or other linguistic factors and using journals to learn more about the students.

Researchers who study students' writing in a journal tend to be quite positive about it, although there are mixed results on the question of whether journal writing improves students' language skills measurably. Peyton (1990) found evidence of morphological development among children learning English as an additional language in a dialog journal which she kept with her students. She believed the journal to be a good way to provide students with input, written by the teacher, at the students' level, as well as providing modeling of correct forms and a place for private interaction between students and teachers. Yoshihara (2008), looking at fluency in

terms of the number of words written, found that there was no statistically significant difference before and after a semester of journal writing. However, she did find a change in students' affect, in that they felt that they had improved. In addition to the study of her own learning mentioned above, Casanave (2011) has also shown that journals can be used in an English class with students of many levels and in many ways. Casanave (1994, cited in Casanave, 2011) did not find a straightforward measurable improvement after students had written diaries, but still felt that the diaries were worthwhile: "Regular practice at any skill, including journal writing, inevitably contributes to improvement, even if we cannot accurately predict what those specific improvements will be for individual students" (p. 44).

Other language researchers have used journals to explore individual differences in learning. Matsumoto (1987) points out that one of the strengths of diary studies is that they can discover "hidden psychological variables" (p. 26) in learning. Meath-Lang (1990) has written about deaf students' awareness of their own learning expressed in journals. Casanave (2011) points out that a journal can be a way for a teacher to communicate with a learner whose level is too low or who is too anxious to communicate orally. Others, such as Bailey (1980, 1983) and Carson and Longhini (2002) used their own journals as language learners to explore their learning more deeply in terms of anxiety and motivation. In Bailey's latter study, she directly looked at issues of anxiety in the classroom and tied it with feelings of inferiority toward other learners. Fedderholt (1998) took a more directive approach to develop students' awareness of strategies by asking them to keep a journal in which they wrote about their goals for and reflections on strategy use. She found that the students' knowledge of strategies grew while keeping the journal, as evidenced by the fact that the journal descriptions became more detailed. My journal project differed from these examples in that I wanted students to discover things about their own learning, rather than finding it myself. However, I also found that I was able to learn new things about the students, as I will discuss later.

Preparing the Students

Students at my college are quite used to writing journals as these are part of the grading process for our writing classes. However, in the writing journals, the students are generally given a topic each time and then graded on how their fluency grows over the semester. I thought that students would need a model to understand how to keep a journal specifically about language learning such as the one I wanted them to keep. When I started the diary of my Bangla learning I wrote a great deal about the many frustrations of learning a language with very few available resources for adult learners, but after conceiving the idea of sharing the journal with students I made a conscious effort to write about positive and motivating things as well. The diary was kept sporadically throughout the spring semester and the summer non-teaching period. It describes my lessons which I took online approximately once per week. During this period for various reasons, I had three Bangla teachers, whom I

identified by the pseudonyms Mousumi, Nandita, and Supriya. All of them are native speakers of Bangla but only one, Mousumi, was a professional teacher with training in language teaching. I also wrote about things I did outside of class to study, which mainly comprise the use of Quizlet and watching movies and listening to Bangla music.

In the version of the journal that I gave them, I tried to edit as little as possible. I sometimes had to make it a bit easier to read, and of course, I had to gloss the Bangla words they would not be familiar with, in addition to some grammar they would not understand. In the edited version, I divided my journal into things I did during class and outside of class, although this was not in the original version. I wanted the out-of-class learning to be more noticeable to them to serve as a model for both their diaries and their language study.

In many places in the diary I pointed out how rewarding I found it to understand authentic speech, particularly when it was tied to some cultural product:

Was listening to [the song] “Asha Chilo, Bhalobasha Chilo” (Mitra & Mazumdar, 1977, translated by the author) again, and all of a sudden I could understand the lyrics: There was hope, there was love; today there is no hope and no love.

Outside of class: I watched *Jibon Trishna* [a Bangla movie]. I didn’t try to understand anything and just watched the subtitles, but I did notice when a character calls another *apni* [“you” formal], *tumi* [“you” informal] or *tui* [“you” intimate].

One important source of my motivation was the realization that I was able to do something I had not been able to before:

[On the boat from Dhaka to Chandpur] I read the words “Nodi, amader ma [the river our mother] on the bridge support and was so happy I could read it before we passed.

I produced a future tense without thinking too much about it.

Another source of motivation was extrinsic: praise. In my journal at that time, it was more usual to find the lack thereof being demotivating:

Nandita simply says “correct” if I do it right and I really miss Mousumi-di saying “Bah! Khub bhalo! [Wow! Very good!]

I worked very hard to prepare the story of *Kaguya-hime* in Bengali and Supriya said it was very good and she understood everything! I wish she would ask questions so I could be sure she understands.

Finally, I tried to be honest about sources of anxiety.

Supriya is pretty busy right now and she has no patience. If I take too long to answer she will do it herself. It’s very frustrating for me.

This type of [news and politics] vocabulary is very difficult to memorize, and I’m a bit discouraged.

I was really nervous about class this week. The last couple of classes I couldn’t really say anything and I felt like I was wasting my money.

Willingness to communicate was very difficult because in my daily life I usually only spoke with my teacher, and so it was not evident in my journal. I decided to just explain the concept at the end of the semester and if students could find evidence of it or the absence of it, in their journals they could write about it.

At the beginning of the 15-week semester, I gave the students an edited version of my journal of about three pages with a worksheet of questions to answer by reading it. (The worksheet is in the appendix). My dilemma was to encourage them to write things that would be analyzable in terms of motivation, anxiety, and willingness to communicate at the end of the semester, without influencing them to make up entries that would later make their final papers easier to write. I wanted them to discover something true about their own learning. Therefore, in the worksheet, I asked them to find “motivation” because they are familiar with that concept in general. I did not mention anxiety or willingness to communicate but asked them to find ways of learning that I like and dislike. They were also asked to think about their own motivation and likes and dislikes. Many students were able to find the range of things that were motivating and demotivating in my diary and think in general about their own learning.

Students wrote two entries per week for the 15-week semester. They made a single Google document for the entire diary. They were told that they would be given a pass/fail grade on the journal itself, based on whether they had done it regularly. They were also told that they would be graded for the quality of the final paper, and that writing in more detail would make it easier to write a good paper. I checked the journal sporadically to make sure they were doing it. The best students wrote about goals, vocabulary, content, and what they were feeling. (Journal entries have been edited for length and clarity, but not grammar).

In general I was very happy with the variety and detail with which my students were writing. The students generally copied the way I wrote my own diary:

The goal for this week : know about thanksgiving.

Class: Firstly, I learned vocabulary related to thanksgiving. After that, I answered three questions before reading an article about thanksgiving and checked the answer of them after reading it. It was fun to read the article because I had never learned about thanksgiving, and it was a good opportunity to know other foreign culture. Also, I answered T/F questions, found a word or phrase from the article, and completed the sentence by choosing correct verbs. I could learn many new words in this activity.

Outside of class: I reviewed vocabulary after school that I learned in a class.

I learned vocabulary related to thanksgiving. [Umeka]

Students expressed quite a bit about motivation:

Basically, I like Disney animation, so I have motivation to study by using Disney animation. Moreover, my motivation went up when the words I catch and the words in the subtitles matched. [Keiko]

However, I had some questions about structure, so I asked my professor. He answered my question clearly. I could understand that. Therefore, I liked atmosphere in this class because it was easy to talk with my classmates and professor. Before I attended the class, I had not had motivation but my motivation has gone back to me. [Keiko]

However, there were examples of negative feelings as well:

Firstly, I played a client [for a role-playing activity in a counseling class]. I have to consult for helper. It was difficult for me because I did not know some feeling words. I could not express collectly [correctly]. It made my classmate confused. I was annoyed by my English. [Keiko]

I did not know how to summarize when my partner used words that I would not normally use even though I understand the meaning. Then, I thought that it is difficult to paraphrase words that I do not usually hear. [Sachi]

These students had enough material to draw on when they wrote their final papers. Other students wrote very cursory accounts of their learning—one or two sentences, and one student misunderstood the assignment and wrote about daily life without any reference to language learning. In those cases, I tried to respond positively to what they had written (e.g. “Shopping sounds fun!”) but also reminded them that the final project would be difficult without the diary as a source of data.

Teaching About Motivation, Anxiety, and Willingness to Communicate

I began to present the students with information about motivation, anxiety, and willingness to communicate with about three weeks left in the semester. The analysis of the journal made up their final paper, which they turned in after the semester was finished.

In the past, students have shown that they equate “motivating” with “fun.” This is problematic for several reasons. First, it is helpful for students to realize the full scope of what is motivating, and that motivation is not always fun or even pleasant. A deeper understanding of motivation can help the students to maintain their own motivation. Second, as trainee teachers, the students tend to plan classes that are full of games because these are fun. Students need to understand that this can be unmotivating (not contributing to motivation) or demotivating (actually making the student unwilling to do the task) if they are not clearly tied to language learning. Students can be motivated to do the game, but unmotivated to learn the language, or they could be demotivated to do the game if they think it is not helping them to learn.

Motivation has of course been studied a great deal, but I had to cut down the available information to make it accessible to learners and applicable to their context. I concentrated in this unit on explaining two models. The first, familiar to many language teachers, is intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. The former refers to motivation coming from “inside” the learner, such as pleasure in one’s achievement or enjoying the activity of language learning. The latter is motivation coming from “outside”: test scores, praise, being able to get a better job, etc. After this, I introduced Gardner’s (1985) socio-educational model of integrative and instrumental motivation. Integrative motivation is being motivated by the desire to “communicate with the [target] community” (p. 11), or gain a better understanding of it. Instrumental motivation is separate from these social-emotional desires and ties language learning

with some other purpose such as employment or ease of travel. While there are other conceptions of motivation that may be more influential today, such as the L2 motivation self-system (Dörnyei, 2005, 2009) intrinsic, extrinsic, instrumental and integrative motivation are relatively simple concepts that can be easily found in a diary, and they give students a way of classifying what they've written. However, students should be told that there may be forms of motivation that are neither integrative nor instrumental (Noels, 2001).

I used a simple PowerPoint to explain the terms, with some examples of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Students were then asked to brainstorm other types of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Students rarely realize that things such as tests and papers are extrinsically motivating, so this allows me to reinforce the fact that things that are motivating might be unpleasant. I also introduce the idea that giving students extrinsic motivation sometimes actually reduces intrinsic motivation. Next, I introduced instrumental and integrative motivation in the same way. This can be a bit difficult as students tend to confuse them with extrinsic and intrinsic. They are given some examples of instrumental motivation—a student who wants high test scores to get a good job, for example, or one who wants to play online games in English—as well as some examples of integrative: a student who loves Korean dramas and wants to communicate online with Korean people. These were relatively easy for students to grasp, and they were able to think about their own motivation and ways of arousing motivation when prompted to do this.

I chose also to examine anxiety because in the context of Japan, there is a folk belief that Japanese are bad at language because they are “shy.” I have heard this from many of my students, and I believe this becomes a vicious cycle in which students become less confident because of the stereotype threat of a “shy Japanese.” I wanted students to understand that language learning anxiety is normal and happens to students of many different countries, and that it can have a negative effect on second language learning (Horwitz, 2001) and on willingness to communicate even among competent students (Zhou, Xi & Lochtman, 2020). I introduced my students to the three types of language learning anxiety according to Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986): communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation. The first can apply to any sort of communication, including in the native language. It is helpful to let students know that almost everyone experiences communication apprehension in some situations, such as speaking in public. Horwitz et al. (1986) point out that it arises in the foreign language context because the speaker will “almost certainly have difficulty understanding others and making oneself understood” (p. 127). It is helpful to explain to students that evaluation does not just mean tests but any opinion someone might form of you. Japanese students especially suffer anxiety from speaking tasks, particularly with an audience (Williams & Andrade, 2008).

The last thing that I introduced was the willingness to communicate. Willingness to communicate is also very complex and difficult to simplify for students. MacIntyre, Clément, Dörnyei and Noels (1998) have delineated many variables, including personality traits such as introversion as well as characteristics of the situation in which the student is communicating. However, I felt that for trainee teachers, it was an important concept. As MacIntyre et al. (1998) noted, “We would argue that the

ultimate goal of the learning process should be to engender in language students the willingness to seek out communication opportunities and the willingness actually to communicate in them” (p. 547). I defined willingness to communicate as a person’s desire to communicate in another language and had students think about how it might change according to the context.

As a final exercise before doing their own analysis, students were asked to brainstorm some examples of these in their groups, so that I could check the concepts. After this, students were instructed to find evidence of these things in their journal, and to write a three-page paper on their sources of motivation (or demotivation), anxiety, and willingness to communicate, using quotations from the diary as evidence. They did not have to write about all three of those things, as I thought it likely that most of them concentrated on only one or two when writing the diary.

Results

Students overwhelmingly chose to write about motivation, either writing exclusively on this topic or concentrating the bulk of the paper on it. Many students were able to use the categories they had learned in order to explain their own motivation:

First, I found that almost all motivations come from my inside. It means that intrinsic motivation is effective for me. For example, I wrote in my language journal, “I am interested in this area, so the contents and words about these were very easy to remember.” [Sachi]

Others thought in detail about what was motivating to them:

The reason is that I was happy when I got my mistakes corrected and when I was praised for my grammar, and I became more motivated about language learning.

[Umeka]

However, the most important points of my learning motivation are that it is comprehensible learning for me. [Sachi].

I choose an animation which is very easy to catch English at first. It was bored [boring] a little bit for me. This is why, I choose an animation that was higher than the previous one. It was a little bit difficult level for me [the level was a little bit difficult for me]. I had to watch carefully in order to not to miss some vocabulary. This situation was motivated [motivating]. When I missed some vocabulary or some vocabulary which I did not know was appeared [when there was vocabulary I did not know], I guessed the meaning. It was very interesting for me. [Keiko]

Fewer students wrote about anxiety although a few had insights. One student tied anxiety in speaking with poorer performance, a very important insight:

I wrote “My English skill is not enough, especially I am weak at talking in English in front of the people. My grammar become incorrect when I talk.” I noticed my anxiety for my language skill. In this time, I accepted my anxiety and tried to improve my language skill by interacting with my classmate who has high English skill. [Keiko]

Overwhelmingly, if students talked about anxiety, it was test anxiety. One student reported that she did not feel other types of anxiety very much, although she had experienced them in the past:

Regarding the language anxiety, my big anxiety is only test anxiety now. However, when I was a junior high and high school student, I think I had all of three big language anxiety such as test anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, and communication apprehension. [Sachi]

This student noted that she felt that her anxiety had gone down since college teachers were more tolerant of mistakes and the same may be true of other students. The students might also feel more test anxiety because Japanese education is highly test-driven, and students probably do feel a great deal of anxiety about language tests. TOEIC scores are quite important to them and determine whether they will be able to move into the third year of their degree and later whether they will be granted a teaching license. It is not surprising that these loom large in their imaginations. It may also be that other types of anxiety—about communicating, making mistakes in class, etc., were felt to be too personal to write about. Bailey (1983) has noted that language anxiety can be tied to a feeling of inferiority toward the teacher or other students, so this might be something that they considered too private to write in a journal I would read.

While happy with the other results, I was disappointed with the writing on willingness to communicate. Most students chose not to write on it at all, and some confused it with motivation. One student did write about it in a general way:

However, by actually going abroad and interacting with the local people, I have become wanting to speak [begun to want to speak] English more. [Sachi]

Nevertheless, my impression is that students did not understand the willingness to communicate enough to apply the concepts. This is understandable, as my treatment of it in the classroom was more cursory.

Several students enjoyed the journal process and thought that it was motivating in itself, both for organizing their learning and understanding what they've learned:

It is useful for me to develop my English skills by writing them as a review on the journal, and I can review these words whenever I like even after writing journals. Furthermore, it provides me with a sense of accomplishment for what I have learned before. Therefore, it helps me motivate myself and get the confidence to learn a language or other things, and I would like to continue writing a language learning journal. [Sachi]

Although I conceived this project as a way for students to better understand their own learning, I felt that I got some insights as well. In an English-medium college, the intrinsic interest of the subjects was motivating to many students, but at the same time, they were demotivated by the long lists of specialized vocabulary that learning their subjects in English entailed. This was mentioned by the majority of students. This made me determine to think of ways to learn vocabulary that might be more useful and easier for students.

Evaluation and Plans for the Future

While I was fairly happy with the results of this project and I think my students learned something valuable, I also found many ways that I would like to improve it. One point that I thought was successful was using my own journal as an example. Most students seemed to understand the type of entry they should make. Moreover, students showed the same amount of variety in terms of the English learning activities they were reporting that I did when writing about my Bangla learning. While I do not know if students were influenced by my diary (and for that matter, I have no way to tell if they were actually doing these activities or just reporting what they thought I wanted to hear), I think they may have obtained some different ideas of how to study the language.

I think the three topics of motivation, anxiety, and willingness to communicate were too many, and my treatment of the last was not thorough enough to allow students to understand it. Willingness to communicate is influenced by various factors in the learner (Zhou et al., 2020) and in the classroom (Dewaele, 2019), and it is possible that exploring these would enhance students' interest and understanding. However, in the future, I think I will only include the first two, perhaps with more details about demotivation. Although willingness to communicate is important, I think it would best be treated separately in the class.

More concrete ways of dealing with these issues, either as students or as teachers, would probably be beneficial both for understanding the concepts and for applying them in their future careers and their own language learning. In the original iteration of the project, this was a final paper, so we did not have the chance to go back and talk about these issues. For example, many students reported "studying hard" as their way of dealing with test anxiety, but Horwitz et al. (1986) has identified this as actually exacerbating the anxiety in some ways. More beneficial ways could be included in the future iterations of the course. Horwitz et al. (1986) mention two basic strategies: helping students to cope with the anxiety, or reducing anxiety-producing situations in the classroom. They also note that certain language learning beliefs have also been found to increase language anxiety, which are the belief that they should not make mistakes and the belief that language students should not guess. These can be pointed out by a teacher as a way of helping students to manage their own anxiety. In terms of motivation, Ur (1996) has offered lists of ways to increase intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and these could be used as language activities. Students could sort these into intrinsic and extrinsic strategies, or give examples of how they could actually be used in their prospective classroom.

Conclusion

This chapter described a project in which I had my students write a language learning journal and analyze it. Although there are many improvements to be made in the

project, I thought it was well worth the effort, and students were generally positive about it as well. Students had a generally positive feeling about the diary and felt that it was motivating by itself. Some expressed the desire to continue it after class. Understanding their attitudes and sources of motivation and anxiety seems to be able to help them to have a greater sense of control over their own learning, to understand their own occasional negative feelings, and to gain a better sense of how to deal with them.

Appendix

Language learning journal worksheet.

Background: Bengali, or Bangla, is a language that is spoken in eastern India and Bangladesh. It is the seventh most-spoken language in the world; more people speak it than Russian, Portuguese, or Japanese. Bengali has a rich literature of poetry, novels, and movies. I became interested in Bangla when I started visiting Bangladesh, and I've been studying with a teacher for several years. I don't really need to use it in Bangladesh, because many Bangladeshis speak English and my friends translate for me, but I am interested in it and I like movies and I like learning languages. I can understand and have a simple conversation.

Look at my language learning journal and answer these questions:

1. What kinds of things do I (Anne) write in my journal?
2. What things are motivating for me?
3. What things are demotivating?
4. How do I like to study?
5. What things are motivating or demotivating for you?
6. How do you like to study English?

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Chapter 18

Second Language Writing Instruction in Iran: The Status Quo and Future Research Agenda



Akram Nayernia and Hassan Mohebbi

Abstract Nowadays, there is no doubt that writing is an integral part of communication, particularly in academic settings. However, writing is considered to be one of the most cumbersome tasks in language learning and teaching. Writing is the most neglected skill in the Iranian language learning and teaching context. Part of this fundamental problem can be attributed to the nature of the writing skill, which is considered to be very difficult, complex, and challenging to master. Few studies have addressed the status of writing instruction and testing in Iran in a systematic manner. This chapter presents the main lines of research conducted on writing instruction and testing, focusing on the studies addressing writing instruction in the Iranian EFL context. In addition, the issues of teachers' cognition, practice, pedagogical knowledge, assessment literacy, and learners' needs and preferences are discussed. In the end, research gaps and areas that need the attention of researchers, educational policymakers, materials developers, and teachers are highlighted.

Keywords Second language writing skill · Writing instruction · Writing research · Iran

Introduction

Given the growing need to communicate in English due to globalization and the increasing demand to publish internationally, particularly among university students and academics, writing has received increasing importance in the language curriculum worldwide in recent times. In addition, writing ability is also considered an indicator of students' learning. The role of writing in the teaching and learning of English is significant as most educators assess their learners' progress in language learning through the writing skill (Javadi-Safa, Vahdany, & Sabet, 2013). Poor writing

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ability negatively impacts the students' achievements in the educational context (Tan, 2011).

Despite the significant role of writing in the teaching–learning process and the learners' academic life, writing is the most neglected skill in language instruction in the Iranian language learning and teaching context. This neglect can be attributed to the nature of the writing skill, as many students and even teachers consider it very difficult, complex, and challenging. This problem is multiplied when it comes to learning writing in a foreign language (FL). In Iran, writing is taught and learned with all the peculiarities of foreign language contexts. English is taught as a foreign language in this country, and students have almost no exposure to it outside the classroom context. One main issue regarding foreign language learning is culture. There is a sharp difference between the Iranian culture and western cultures, as represented in English textbooks. A major part of this difference is rooted in the religious beliefs of the Iranian people. This leads to somewhat negative attitudes toward learning English. The political stance of the Iranian government also adds to the complexity of issues.

A set of factors shape foreign language writing instructions in different FL settings which distinguish them from L1 situations. The most prominent factor distinguishing the two contexts is the language spoken in the environment. In the L1 context, the learner is exposed to the language to be learned. In contrast, in the FL learning situation, the language is not spoken in the learner's immediate environment, although mass media may provide opportunities for practicing receptive skills. Ringbom (1980) points to factors such as time available for learning, input type, teacher's role, and skills to distinguish L1 and FL contexts. It is therefore not surprising that a productive skill like writing will be neglected. Contextual factors can significantly impact the teaching and learning of English writing. Reichelt (2009a, 2009b) points out some internal (e.g. teaching environment, students' purposes, and educational practices) and external (e.g. historical, economic, and political) factors that shape FL writing instruction in diverse sociocultural contexts. According to Rinnert and Kobayashi (2009), the EFL setting with its social and cultural issues provides a meta-knowledge about writing that adds to the complexity of mastering this skill in such settings.

In the Iranian FL context, there is a growing need for and interest in learning English, particularly developing the learners' writing skills in English. While the Iranian EFL context has much in common with other EFL contexts, it also has some unique features that set it apart. Therefore, it is important to take into consideration how different factors have contributed to shaping writing instruction in the country.

Method

This chapter provides an overview of the status quo of writing instruction and assessment in the Iranian context, the role of technology in writing instruction and assessment, and plagiarism among Iranian EFL learners and writers. To this aim, a comprehensive and systematic review of the studies in these areas was conducted. Articles published in accredited international journals that were explicitly focused on different aspects of writing were obtained through searching the related keywords on the article databases such as Google Scholar, Scopus, ERIC, Clarivate, and the leading publishers' websites. The articles focusing on writing instruction and assessment in the Iranian context published from 2000 onward were selected for this review. The main keywords used for searching the articles in databases were writing instruction, foreign language writing, writing assessment, Iran, and Iranian context.

The Role of Writing in Language Instruction in the Iranian FL Context

The role of writing skills in academic and educational contexts is self-evident. It is a means of communication, presentation of materials, and instruction in such settings. Regarding the critical role of and the high demand for English writing instruction in the EFL context of Iran, one needs to consider the necessity of developing the writing skill of the English major students to deal with their written assignments. This is also the case for non-English major students, particularly graduate students, who need to publish papers in English as a requirement for admission to and graduation from different programmes. Also, university lecturers are obliged to publish their research in international journals and present their findings in international conferences in English. This is what Jiang and Hyland (2020) call the expansion of international publishing that is considered a positive development, both for academics to share their research findings and for developing nations who strive to participate in the 'knowledge economy'. The other groups in urgent need of developing the writing skill are those who need to take part in high-stakes English proficiency examinations like IELTS or TOEFL to meet part of the requirements of obtaining a visa to leave the country for personal, commercial, or educational purposes. Also, many people in the country attempt to develop their writing ability as an asset for doing business internationally (Naghdipour, 2016).

In an attempt to describe the status of English writing instruction in the Iranian FL context and the factors influencing it, Naghdipour (2016) conducted a qualitative study employing interviews with and observation of teachers and learners of different education levels. Data derived from interviews with teachers in his study revealed some of the factors that contributed to the growth of EFL writing in Iran which include the popularity of English as the main language for written communication, the growing development of online media where people need to communicate in the

written channel, and the significance of English writing for emigration as well as professional and academic purposes.

Naghdipour (2016) pointed to the negative attitude toward the English language and culture due to ideological sentiments that result in a lack of support for teaching writing in the Iranian educational context. In addition, such ideology has resulted in an indigenized and localized version of English in such contexts that overlooks the real needs of learners in the age of globalization. In response to the escalating demands of the contemporary era, educators need to take on more responsibility to prepare students as fully-fledged individuals in the new competitive academic and professional world. According to these findings, the major reason for ignoring this skill in the English language teaching curriculum is the lack of support for teaching English in general, which may be attributed to cultural issues and negative attitudes toward this language in the country. Other factors inhibiting English writing instruction in Iran are the logistic, institutional, and practical problems. Together with the political and economic issues, these problems align with the issues mentioned by Al-Jarrah and Al-Ahmad (2013) in the Jordanian EFL context. In Iran, factors such as university lecturers' involvement in overtime work and private tutoring, crowded classes, heavy teaching load, and low payment might contribute to teachers' reluctance to devote sufficient time to teaching writing. In addition, the belief promoted by private language institutes that associate knowing a language more with the ability to speak rather than to write undermines the role and importance of writing in language learning. However, despite the focus of private language institutes on spoken language, they are still more successful than state-run schools in developing the learners' communicative competence in English (Naghdipour, 2016).

Borrowing Manchon's (2009) terminology, another idiosyncrasy of the FL context that might affect the learners' writing process is the transfer of features from L1 to the target language. However, despite the significant role of L1 in L2 writing development and suggestions for further research on contrastive rhetoric and language transfer (e.g. Connor, 2004; Kaplan, 1996; Kobayashi & Rinnert, 2008; Leki, 1991), a few studies have focused explicitly on Persian rhetorical organizations and the idea of transfer. Among those few studies, Babaii and Ramazani (2017) investigated the bi-directionality of transfer of macro-level rhetorical patterns in Iranian English learners' argumentative writing. Their study revealed a positive interrelationship between the learners' L1 and L2 writing proficiency, pointing to the probable transfer of specific organization patterns between the two languages.

Javadi-Safa, Vahdany, and Sabet (2013) investigated the cross-linguistic transfer of writing skills between L1 (Persian) and L2 (English) in the Iranian EFL context. Their study revealed a significant relationship between L1 and L2, suggesting that learners' proficiency in L1 writing can predict their proficiency in L2 writing. They also found a cross-linguistic transfer of writing sub-skills (e.g. content, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics). These findings point to the facilitating (positive transfer) and even debilitating effect (negative transfer) of transferring that skill from L1 to L2 that might present challenges for English writing instruction in Iran as an EFL context.

Salmani Nodoushan (2018), in another study in the context of Iran, noticed that in Iran, a significant amount of English language curriculum time was devoted to writing instruction, while the outcome was unsatisfactory. He pointed out that learners graduate from university without even writing an acceptable paragraph or essay in English. Part of the problems mentioned by researchers about the unsatisfactory status of writing in Iran lies in the lack of robust systematic research in this area. For example, as Salmani Nodoushan (2018) mentioned, random research endeavors addressing various aspects of EFL writing mainly focused on higher-level students rather than basic-level writing. According to Naghdipour (2016), institutions failed to adequately support teachers and lecturers to attend conferences and conduct research to keep themselves updated concerning new developments and findings in L2 writing. He suggested that L2 writing instruction in Iran and other EFL contexts needs to be re-evaluated in light of recent research findings.

Briefly speaking, the points mentioned above and the literature review all point to the insufficiency of systematic research and the systematic application of research findings in teaching and learning writing. Although recently there have been attempts to research writing skills, such studies have mainly focused on writing assessment rather than writing instruction. The reason might be the nature of this skill that lends itself more to testing and assessment and the fact that teaching writing takes much time and might not be feasible for research purposes.

Writing Assessment in Iran

Most studies on writing have dealt with writing assessment and the impact of assessment techniques and feedback on the learners' writing ability in this context. Hyland (2019) argues that the teachers' feedback, in terms of its content and method, can provide students with valuable information about their teacher's view about their subject, learning, and the value of literacy in their disciplines. Such information is of great importance in SL and FL contexts as students are often not sure of their writing and its importance.

Among the studies conducted in this area, many focused on the role of alternative assessment techniques (e.g. self-/peer-assessment, portfolios, conferencing, and journals) in the development of writing skills (e.g. Birjandi & Hadidi Tamjid, 2010, 2012; Fathi & Khodabakhsh, 2019; Fathi, Mohebiniya & Nourzadeh, 2019b; Iraj, Enayat & Momeni, 2016; Javaherbakhsh, 2010; Mazloomi & Kabiri, 2016, 2018; Moradan & Hedayati, 2012; Mosmery & Barzegar, 2015).

Although most of these studies revealed the positive impact of self and peer-assessment as well as portfolios, conferencing, and journals (as instances of alternative assessment) on students' writing performance, a study by Ketabi (2015) found that writing essays and dictation are the most common methods of assessing writing whereas alternative assessment methods (e.g. portfolios, journals, and peer/self-assessment) are least common. To account for the unpopularity of portfolios and journals, Ketabi (2015) stated that these methods are highly time-consuming. In

this regard, Brown (2004, cited in Ketabi, 2015) noted that alternative assessment methods may not always be practical.

Ketabi's (2015) study also indicated that variations across and within learners lead to low reliability of self- and peer-assessment, which, she argues, might account for teachers' lack of trust in these alternatives. Teachers also lacked sufficient knowledge of portfolios and journals, which is why teachers could not employ these two alternative assessment methods. Thus, lack of knowledge about alternative assessment methods, as well as insufficient time to implement them, might explain the cause of unpopularity of portfolios, journals, and peer/self-assessment among Iranian teachers.

Studies have also inquired into the role of alternative assessment on learners' cognition and attitude toward writing. Farahian, Avarzamani and Rajabi (2020) shed light on the product-oriented approach to EFL writing that prevails in writing instruction in Iran and the little knowledge of the cognitive processes involved in composing a text. They argued that metacognition and reflection received little attention in writing curricula resulting in a lack of awareness of the role of higher-order thinking in the writing processes of constructing a text. In this respect, they investigated the role of portfolios in enhancing different levels of reflection in EFL writing. Their study indicated that using portfolios improved the understanding and reflection of the learners. They recommend incorporating portfolio writing in EFL courses to enhance EFL writers' reflection on writing.

In this line of research, Fathi, Mohebiniya, and Nourzadeh (2019b) investigated the effect of self-assessment and peer-assessment on L2 writing self-regulation of Iranian EFL learners. Their study showed that both self-assessment and peer-assessment promoted the L2 writing self-regulation of the learners. They specifically found that peer-assessment had higher potential than self-assessment concerning writing self-regulation. They concluded that peer-assessment tasks were more effective than the self-assessment ones in promoting the writing self-regulation of the learners.

Another important issue regarding writing assessment is how learners' performance is assessed. According to Lee (2007), students' writing performance has historically been tested summatively, in the form of a grade, which suggests how much they achieve retrospectively. In contrast, formative assessment of writing has a prospective approach indicating to the learner and the teacher what needs to be improved. The distinction between summative and formative assessment of writing is related to the product and process approaches to teaching writing. Summative assessment as an indicator of traditional approaches to teaching writing is still the prevalent approach for assessing students' performance in the Iranian educational context (Birjandi & Hadidi Tamjid, 2012; Naghdipour, 2016; Rahimi, 2009), particularly in state-run schools and universities.

Naghdipour (2017) explored the potential impact of formative assessment on improving Iranian learners' writing ability and attitudes toward writing and its assessment. His study revealed that formative assessment provided students with opportunities to minimize their errors and problems in different areas of writing. His findings also indicated that formative assessment strategies were built on the students'

strengths and provided them with continuous information and guidance to identify weaknesses and close gaps in their writing.

Inspired by the paucity of research on formative assessment in the Iranian context, Tavakoli, Amirian, Burner, Davoudi and Ghaniabadi (2018) developed an instrument based on Black and Wiliam's (2009) model of FA and Hattie and Timperley's (2007) feedback model to operationalize the construct of formative assessment of writing. Their instrument involved five dimensions: clarifying criteria, evidence on students' learning, feedback to move learners forward, peer-assessment, and autonomy. In another study, Tavakoli et al. (2019) validated the five dimensions of formative assessment instrument through Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and found that formative assessment of writing could not be practised within its full potential with five components. They hypothesized that formative assessment is not utilized in the current EFL context. They argue that writing assessment in Iran still follows a product-based approach and feedback in a single stage. It is characterized by the teachers' focus on students' final products, which is not followed by students' further reflection on the received feedback (Ketabi, 2015).

The other major line of research on writing focuses on the feedback type. In particular, many studies have recently been conducted to examine the effect of feedback type on the learners' writing performance and different components of writing from different perspectives, and teachers' and learners' perceptions of different feedback types in the Iranian context (e.g. Amrhein & Nassaji, 2010; Jodaie & Farrokhi, 2012; Khatib & Mirzaii, 2016; Nemati, Alavi, Mohebbi & Masjedlou, 2017a, 2017b).

Nemati, Alavi, Mohebbi, and Masjedlou (2017a) recommended that teachers incorporate more effective feedback practices by considering learners' viewpoints, needs, and preferences. They emphasized the urgent need to research to reach definitive conclusions about the best feedback practices in language learning classrooms. They also encouraged researchers to do more studies on teachers' and learners' feedback beliefs, perceptions, and preferences to have a complete picture of feedback and writing instruction. This line of research can significantly contribute to improving teachers' feedback practices and learners' learning in the Iranian EFL context. In another study, Nemati, Alavi, Mohebbi, and Masjedlou, (2017b) addressed the Iranian teachers' writing proficiency, writing assessment ability, beliefs, and practices on written corrective feedback and their role in improving writing instruction in second language learning classrooms. They found that Iranian English teachers' writing proficiency did not meet the expected standards as their writing assessment ability was inaccurate. Moreover, their study results indicated that the teachers mostly gave unfocused direct written corrective feedback, and they did not use technology in writing instruction. A vast majority of them did not require the learners to revise the texts that received feedback. In addition, their research findings indicated that a majority of the teachers did not study the research papers due to lack of time or no access to the journals. They concluded that more research is needed to gain insights that would help improve the quality of writing instruction in the Iranian classroom context. According to Nemati, Alavi, Mohebbi, and Masjedlou (2017b), more research seems necessary, in varying contexts, to advance practical suggestions for teachers who give written corrective feedback on and grade students' writing.

These issues should not be neglected as they can provide insights which could be of great use for improving writing instruction in the Iranian context.

Technology and Writing Instruction

With the advent of technology and its incorporation into the educational context, language teaching and learning have changed dramatically. In the Iranian EFL context, studies have been conducted on different aspects of technology use and its role in writing performance, development and assessment. The studies show that the use of technology has both merits and challenges.

Kashani, Mahmud, and Kalajahi (2013) compared the effectiveness of two tools of teaching writing, namely blog and pen-and-paper, in learners' writing performance. Their study showed that the tools themselves could not affect the quality of writing essays and improve students' writing performance. However, they argued that using technology could motivate the EFL learners to write more because the innovation might inspire them to learn in contrast with old traditional methods of learning to write. The Iranian graduate students found blogging a more inviting and motivating instrument for writing.

In another study, Fathi, Ahmadnejad and Yousofi (2019a) investigated the effects of blog-mediated writing instruction on L2 students' writing motivation, self-efficacy, and self-regulation. Their study indicated that integrating blogs into EFL writing instruction contributed to Iranian learners' writing motivation and self-regulation. Surprisingly, they found that the blog-mediated writing course decreased the writing self-efficacy of the EFL students. They argued that the fear of other judgments and evaluations might have reduced the writing self-efficacy of the learners.

The role of blog-mediated instruction in EFL learners' writing performance and anxiety was examined in another study by Fathi and Nourzadeh (2019). They attempted to probe into the EFL learners' attitudes toward blog-mediated writing instruction. The results of their research revealed a significant positive effect of blog-mediated instruction on L2 writing performance. They found that the blog-mediated course reduced the participants' L2 writing anxiety. Their study showed that the learners generally had a positive attitude toward the blog-mediated writing course.

The study by Jabbari, Mohammadi, and Fazilatfar (2017) explored the effect of an asynchronous online discussion forum on improving students' writing ability and their attitudes toward writing in English. The results revealed that students' writing significantly improved, both semantically and syntactically, due to incorporating online discussion forums. Qualitatively speaking, the participants expressed a positive stance toward writing.

The findings of the studies mentioned above, together with other studies on the role of technology in writing instruction (e.g. Abedi, Keshmirshakan & Namaziandost, 2019; Mozaheb & Shahiditabar, 2018; Qassemzadeh & Soleimani, 2016; Safdari, 2021), underscore the positive impact of integrating technology in writing instruction

in the Iranian EFL setting. The rising demands for technology in our current times and the limitations imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic have necessitated increased reliance upon technology in education. This situation presents an urgent need for studies to uncover the potential of technology that might help English language educators, learners, and other stakeholders deal with the challenges presented by today's emergent conditions in the Iranian EFL contexts.

Plagiarism in Iranian Learners' Writing

Plagiarism is a serious problem across different disciplines. It is considered a heinous crime in the academic community (Pecorari, 2003). With the growing demand to publish papers and present research findings, plagiarism has become an ethical issue in academia. It has recently received special attention in different fields of study, especially in FL academic writing.

In Iran, studies have been conducted investigating different aspects of plagiarism in FL learners' writing. Ahmadi (2014) argued that plagiarism is quite common among Iranian FL learners. He pointed out a number of reasons for this, including students' lack of knowledge of plagiarism, shortage of time in writing academic assignments, and professors' lenient attitude toward plagiarism. He called for due attention to this issue. He argued that teachers need to assess their students' understanding of plagiarism and instruct them on this issue. Also, students are to be informed of the consequences of committing such wrongdoing. Amiri and Razmjoo (2016) conducted a qualitative study to investigate Iranian EFL undergraduate students' views on plagiarism, their degree of awareness about it, and the reasons for plagiarizing. Their study showed that students have little awareness of plagiarism in its different forms. They found a number of factors that lead to plagiarism, including teachers' reluctance to check plagiarism, their limited writing and research skills, pressure from peers, pressure to submit high-quality assignments, and ease of plagiarizing. They stressed the need for practical policies and a consistent framework to enhance students' awareness at initial stages to reduce the frequency of plagiarism at later stages. They also emphasized the importance of the role of course instructors in developing rich writing and referencing skills in students and adopting a more serious attitude toward innovative and genuine research.

Students' unawareness of plagiarism and its different forms in the Iranian context have been pointed out as a major issue in a number of studies (e.g. Babaii & Nejadghanbar, 2017; Zarfsaz & Ahamdi, 2017). These studies underscore the importance of instruction about plagiarism for Iranian EFL learners.

Concluding Remarks and Future Research Agenda

The growing need to communicate through the medium of the English language along with the demands of globalization has led to increased recognition of writing as a communicative channel. Academics, students majoring in English and non-English disciplines, and professionals feel the urge to master this complex, difficult, and challenging skill. Acquiring this skill is even more challenging in the Iranian FL context due to its peculiar cultural, political, economic, and ideological contexts. It is the responsibility of policymakers, materials developers, and teachers to plan appropriate writing instruction strategies, develop useful and proper materials, and employ appropriate teaching and learning techniques and assessment tools to enhance learners' writing ability. Considering the significant role writing plays in the academic lives of the individuals, more work is needed at the policy level to facilitate writing instruction in educational settings.

Research can play a significant part in finding solutions to the existing problems in teaching writing. There is a need for systematic research on different aspects of teaching writing and the factors affecting it. More applied research, in the form of action and classroom research on different aspects of writing, seems necessary, which will have direct implications for improving writing instruction in the Iranian EFL context. Such research should consider the country's unique conditions in terms of political, cultural, economic, and contextual factors. In other words, more localized studies are required to find remedies for the problems inherent in teaching, learning, and assessing writing in the Iranian EFL context. It is also important to make sure that the research findings inform the formulation of policies and are translated into classroom practices to benefit both teachers and learners.

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Chapter 19

Impact of Textual Enhancement on EFL Learners' Noticing and Acquisition of Noun and Verb Phrases



Akhter Jahan and Subramaniam Govindasamy

Abstract It has been argued that textual enhancement (TE)—modifying the written input visually—can raise the saliency of target forms. This focus on form procedure can enable learner's noticing of forms which is a crucial factor in language learning and acquisition. The fourteen-week quasi-experimental study reported in this chapter examined whether multiple exposures to enhanced texts could promote participant's noticing and thereby grammatical development of three pairs of forms related to certain uses of articles, modal auxiliaries, and voice in the noun and the verb phrases. One hundred Bangladeshi tertiary learners participated in the study. They were divided into three groups: enhanced, non-enhanced, and control. A reading comprehension task, a noticing question, and two grammar tasks were used to elicit data. A pre-test along with post-tests was conducted. Six sets of texts were used. The data were analyzed quantitatively. The results revealed that multiple exposures to TE would be effective in increasing the noticing and acquisition of the targeted forms to different extents depending on their distinctive features. Based on the findings, we argue that teachers should take those features into account and introduce the forms by focusing on their form-meaning-function mappings in the class to promote learners' grammatical development.

Keywords Textual enhancement · Input · Noticing · Grammatical development

Introduction

Educators have long been struggling to identify the best way to facilitate English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners' grammatical development in different contexts (Long, 2017; Schenck, 2017). This issue is also a matter of great concern for the

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Bangladeshi tertiary teachers as the learners at this level make frequent grammatical errors in using subject-verb agreement, articles, and different forms of verbs in academic writing even after having 12 years of formal exposure to EFL (Afrin, 2016; Karim et al., 2018). Sultana (2014) points out that since a large number of these students lack fluency and accuracy in English, they usually remain passive in classrooms and gradually develop lower self-esteem and poor self-confidence. These problems might occur because these learners may not be able to make a proper form to function mappings in the Target Language (TL) in different communicative situations because of their limited exposure to the TL outside the classroom (Brunfaut & Green, 2017) and the great amount of explicit metalinguistic instructions that they received for learning grammar at both pre-tertiary and tertiary levels (Haque, 2014; Jahan & Govindasamy, 2021; Jahan & Kormos, 2015). They also tend to apply memorization as the main strategy to gain knowledge about the grammar rules disregarding developing an understanding of form-function mappings (Jahan & Govindasamy, 2021). Due to this type of exposure, Bangladeshi tertiary learners might not be able to make significant improvements in their spoken or written performances in the English language courses at this level as their previous learning experiences might block their way to developing new learning experiences (Cintrón-Valentín & Ellis, 2016). Textual Enhancement of input is such a Focus on Form (FonF)-based teaching procedure that could be helpful in this context.

Researchers have suggested that TE might be able to assist those learners who could not develop grammatical accuracy in the TL despite having long-term pre-exposure to it (Lee, 2007; White, 1998). Since Bangladeshi learners have that kind of exposure to EFL, it can be expected that TE of input, which focuses on drawing learners' attention to form-function mapping in meaningful contexts (Nassaji & Fotos, 2011), would enable them to express the targeted meaning by using different target forms in various contexts. This study has been designed taking these factors into account. Since the impact of TE on the uses of different tenses and subject-verb agreement has already been investigated in the Bangladeshi context (Jahan, 2018; Jahan & Govindasamy, 2021; Jahan & Kormos, 2015), the uses of indefinite and definite articles, modal auxiliaries 'should' and 'could,' active and passive voice forms of verbs have been targeted in the study involving Bangladeshi tertiary learners as the participants to examine whether or not TE could facilitate noticing and thereby grammatical development of those targeted forms through multiple exposures to enhanced texts.

Textual Enhancement and Teaching Grammar

Input enhancement refers to the use of different pedagogical devices through which 'the perceptual salience of the target items' is inflated in the input (Long & Robinson, 1998, p. 24) so that learners' chances of noticing targeted items in the linguistic data can increase (Schmidt, 2001). It is an implicit FonF technique where learners' attention is drawn to meaning first and then to the form in the input (Kim & Nassaji,

2018). TE can be distinguished as an input enhancement procedure that can elevate the saliency of visual or oral input to facilitate learners' noticing of target forms in a meaningful context, thereby providing them with the required support for acquiring targeted items' form-function mappings (Nassaji & Fotos, 2011; Schmidt, 2001; Smith, 1991, 1993).

Input cannot become intake without being noticed (Ögeyik, 2018). Smith (1993) in his noticing hypothesis argued that the probability of noticing any targeted items in texts can be increased if learners are given repeated exposure to them. However, Truscott and Smith (2011) redefined noticing as the kind of awareness of input that has been recognized by learners' interlanguage grammar, and it can also be considered as 'the registration of a sensory example' (p. 503) that the input contains a specific target form. They further mentioned that 'noticing necessarily has a lower boundary that distinguishes it from simple awareness of input and an upper boundary that distinguishes it from awareness at the level of understanding' (Truscott & Smith, 2011, p. 501). Therefore, noticing and understanding are different. Since humans can process only a certain amount of input at a time and the interpretation of meaning is of prominence to them (VanPatten, 2007), their noticing of the targeted forms will occur only if they have to decipher the meanings of the targeted items and only when they will have necessary attentional resources available to facilitate the noticing and the processing of those forms (Cho & Reinders, 2013). Therefore, if learners' attention is not drawn to the targeted features in the input through manipulations, they might not notice those items (VanPatten, 2015). However, input enhancement is different from input enrichment in that the latter one can expose learners to the input which will be rich in some specific linguistic features and require them to process this input primarily for meaning (Ellis, 2001).

TE is an 'implicit and unobtrusive' way of focusing learners' attention on the targeted forms which can be enhanced by typographical modifications in the input (Nassaji & Fotos, 2011, p. 41). Even if learners receive exposure to certain highlighted features in the input, they may fail to notice those forms and thereby making no update to their interlanguage system. It may happen due to the uncertainty that noticing may not always lead to intake and/or acquisition (Smith & Truscott, 2014). Different factors such as the number of transformations that are needed to create the correct forms (Hulstijn & de Graaff, 1994), the complexity of meaning which arises if the meaning of a form is too abstract for learners to infer from the input (e.g. articles in English) (DeKeyser, 2005), perceptual saliency (Doughty & Williams, 1998), and contrasts between learners' First Language (L1) and TL structures (Nassaji, 2017) could play important roles in determining the grammatical complexities and related learning difficulties. These factors can 'make one form more learnable than the others' in the FonF-based classes (Doughty & Williams, 1998, p. 214). The role of interlanguage in L2 processing could also determine the amount of noticing of any targeted forms (VanPatten, 2007). The target forms can further vary in terms of learning and structural complexities due to which learners may process those items to different extents (VanPatten, 2007). Therefore, whether or not the enhanced input will be able to generate 'the relevant mental representation' (Smith, 1991, p. 120) for language acquisition is an empirical question.

Due to the dissimilar and inconsistent findings of the previous TE studies (Benati, 2016; Han, Park & Combs, 2008), EFL teachers may find difficulties in deciding whether or not they could treat all of the forms with TE which does not involve any metalinguistic explanation. Though one group of researchers found facilitating impact of TE on noticing (Arani & Yazdanimoghaddam, 2016; Bakhshandeh & Jafari, 2018; Izumi, 2002; Jahan & Kormos, 2015; Loewen & Inceoglu, 2016; Winke, 2013), another group of researchers identified insignificant impact of TE on the production of the target forms (Bayonas, 2017; Hassani, Azarnoosh, & Naeini, 2015; Indrarathne & Kormos, 2016; Lee, 2007; Overstreet, 1998; Pawlak & Mystkowska-Wiertelak, 2019; Rassaei, 2020; Shi, 2017; White, 1998). These findings may create ambiguities regarding the ‘cognitive and pedagogical effect’ of input enhancement (Winke, 2013, p. 324) as some forms may need to be treated with more explicit instructions for gaining better comprehension of their form to function mappings (Doughty & Williams, 1998). In that case, meaning-based form-focused instruction like TE (Nassaji & Fotos, 2011) may not suffice. Therefore, we need to examine the impact of multiple exposures to TE of input concerning different forms to identify which forms can be treated with this implicit technique and which forms would require explicit instruction. Considering these issues, this chapter will focus on examining the following research questions targeting three pairs of forms related to noun and verb phrase constructions:

1. To what extent do multiple exposures to enhanced texts promote EFL learners’ noticing of the target forms?
2. To what extent do multiple exposures to TE develop EFL learners’ ability to express the targeted meanings by using the target forms?

The Study

Participants

A total of 113 first-semester students of a private university in Bangladesh initially participated in the study and took a pre-test. Based on the test results, only 100 of them were requested to participate in the rest of the study, and these learners gained 40% or less than that of the total score in the pre-test. These participants ($N = 100$) were divided into three groups following a random sampling procedure. The enhanced and the non-enhanced groups had 40 participants each, and the control group had 20 participants. All of their L1 was Bangla, and they studied in Bangla medium institutions at the pre-tertiary level. These participants were attending only a spoken English course at that university at the time of data collection.

Target Forms

Three pairs of forms were targeted in the study reviewing the written error analysis results of the previous research (Karim et al., 2018). Considering the abstractness of the meaning of the articles (DeKeyser, 2005), the definite and the indefinite articles were emboldened in the study. **A+N+/-Ø**/construction was chosen at first. The indefinite article 'A' is used when a precise differentiation is not required among the referents (such as persons and objects) (Yule, 2003, p. 33), for example, in the sentence, 'Please hand me **a** book, any book will do.' In contrast, the form **The + N + /Ø, -es, -s/** was chosen. The article 'the' has a distinguishing effect. The use of 'The' marks 'the specific thing(s) I'm talking about' (Yule, 2003, p. 33), for example, in the sentence, 'Please hand me all **the** books that are on the tables.'

As the meanings of the modal auxiliaries are expressed with the help of verbal lexis in Bangla (the participants' L1), a pair of modals was chosen in the study. The form, **should + base form of V**, was selected first. The use of 'should' offers that the speaker or writer suggests that there is a 'correct way' of doing things (Elbaum, 2001b, p. 166). Therefore, its use indicates a higher level of hypotheticality of an event taking place (Govindasamy, 2002), for example, in the dialogue, '**A**: Do I have to be polite? **B**: No, you don't have to but you **should be**.' On the other hand, the form, **could + the base form of V**, was targeted. The use of 'could' in a suggestion offers that the recipient of the message has 'a choice,' that is, s/he may or may not follow a suggestion (Elbaum, 2001b, p. 166). Therefore, it indicates a lower level of hypotheticality of an event taking place (Govindasamy, 2002), for example, in the dialogue, '**A**: Do I have to listen to the caller? **B**: No, you don't have to. You **could** just **hang up**.'

Due to the complex structure and meaning, the voice forms in the third person present simple tense were targeted. The active voice form, **the base form of verb or V + /Ø/, /-s/ or /-es/**, was targeted at first. This voice form is used to imply that the Doer is exerting control over the event (Govindasamy & Hashim, 2014), for example, in the sentences, 'He **plays** football, I **eat** rice.' The form **be + V-en** was targeted next. This passive voice form of the verb is used when lower focus or lower thematic control is exerted by the subject/ the Doer over the occurrence (Govindasamy & Hashim, 2014), for example, in the sentences, 'Football **is played**, Rice **is eaten**.' This study was designed targeting these three pairs of forms.

Materials

The uses of the target forms were demonstrated in text A and text B in both enhanced and non-enhanced versions for giving multiple exposures to the forms. The texts included: *Malaysia tiger mauling stopped by wife with soup ladle* (Text A, 145 words) (Malaysia tiger mauling, 2011, February 14) and '*Cat burglar*' *Denis* (Text B, 168 words) ('Cat burglar' Denis, 2012, September 20) for the articles; *Making*

a Monthly Budget (Text A, 332 words) (Werner, Nelson, Hyzer, & Church, 2003, p. 87) and *Smart Shopping: Coupons and Rebates* (Text B, 354 words) (Elbaum, 2001a, p. 258) for the modals; and *The Oscars* (Text A, 236 words; Elbaum, 2001b, p. 78) and *Jury Duty in America* (Text B, 233 words) for the voice forms (Elbaum, 2001b, p. 372). All the texts were modified according to the level of the participants. The targeted forms were emboldened in equal numbers per form (5 + 5) so that input flood could be controlled (Han et al., 2008).

The Design

This 14-week study was quasi-experimental. The enhanced and the non-enhanced groups were exposed to the enhanced and the non-enhanced versions of the texts, respectively. This study involved a pre-test, an intermediate post-test, and a delayed post-test. Before conducting the pre-test, a background questionnaire and a consent form were given to the participants. The participants took the pre-test in week one. They got exposure to the first set of texts focusing on the articles after 2 weeks of the pre-test, and then, they got exposure to the texts highlighting the uses of the modal auxiliaries and the voice forms in one week's interval sequentially.

There were two exposure sessions within an interval of a day in a week. The enhanced and the non-enhanced groups were further divided into text A first (n = 20) and text B first (n = 20) groups to examine the task order effects. They read the texts at first within 15–20 min. The allotted time for reading varied as per the length of the texts. Then, they had to do a Multiple-Choice Question (MCQ) answer task (5 min). After the second exposure, the participants answered a noticing question (5 min) and took the intermediate post-test which had a form recognition-based grammar task 1 (fill-in-the-blanks) and a controlled form production-based grammar task 2 (choosing the correct forms). These grammar tasks were part of all the tests. After seven weeks of the treatment, the delayed post-test was taken. 10 min were allotted for each of the grammar tasks. The control group was not involved during the treatment. They participated only in those tests. All the instruments were piloted before starting the data collection, and the study took place in classrooms. Jahan (2018), Jahan and Govindasamy (2021), and Jahan and Kormos (2015) used similar instruments in their studies on different pairs of target forms.

Data Analysis

Both quantitative and qualitative data were elicited in this study. Different scoring procedures were used for analyzing the quantitative data. The correct answers of the MCQ reading tasks and grammar tasks received '1' score whereas the incorrect answers got '0.' Regarding the qualitative data of the noticing question, if the participants responded that they had noticed the targeted forms (either bolded or unbolded),

their responses were coded as '1.' In contrast, if the participants mentioned any other forms rather than the targeted ones, their responses were coded as '0.'

SPSS (version 23) was utilized in this study for data analysis. The raw scores of all the tests including the pre-test, and the two post-tests were transferred to the software. The significance level was fixed at 0.05. To measure the gain scores of the participants in the post-tests regarding the total test scores and per task test scores, the scores of the pre-test were subtracted from both the post-test scores. The gap between the two scores demonstrated the level of grammatical development of the participants. A repeated measure Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was performed on the gain scores by setting the total gain scores of each of the target forms per post-test as within-subject factor, and treatment (such as enhanced, non-enhanced, and control) and the test orders (A first or B first) as between-subject factors. It was found that text order had no statistically significant task order effect on the gain scores of the treatment groups since the ANOVA results for the gain scores for each pair of the target forms were as follows: for the articles $F = 0.369$ and $p = 0.545$, the modals $F = 0.999$ and $p = 0.320$, and the voice forms $F = 0.142$ and $p = 0.707$. Then, the normality of distribution of the gain scores was examined by measuring the descriptive statistics along with skewness and kurtosis of the distribution. The results of that analysis revealed that all the scores were normally distributed.

Findings

The one-way ANOVA results for the pre-test mean scores of the enhanced, the non-enhanced, and the control groups revealed that they had a similar level of background knowledge about the target forms. Consequently, these groups did not vary from each other statistically significantly in their use of the articles ($M = 6.77$, $SD = 0.98$, $F(2,97) = 0.273$, $p = 0.762$), the modals ($M = 6.58$, $SD = 1.10$, $F(2,97) = 2.216$, $p = 0.114$), and the voice forms ($M = 5.56$, $SD = 1.23$, $F(2,97) = 0.493$, $p = 0.612$). Table 19.1 shows the descriptive statistics for each of the group's scores in the pre-test.

Table 19.1 Pre-test total scores: treatment groups and target forms

Target forms	Control ($N = 20$)		Non-enhanced ($N = 40$)		Enhanced ($N = 40$)		Total ($N = 100$)	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Indefinite and definite articles	6.90	1.12	6.70	1.04	6.78	0.86	6.77	0.98
Modals 'should' and 'could'	6.80	1.05	6.30	1.26	6.75	0.89	6.58	1.10
Active and passive verbs	5.56	1.23	5.42	1.21	5.70	1.26	5.56	1.23

Table 19.2 Descriptive statistics for text A and B comprehension scores

Target forms	Text A				Text B			
	Enhanced ($N = 40$)		Non-enhanced ($N = 40$)		Enhanced ($N = 40$)		Non-enhanced ($N = 40$)	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Indefinite and definite articles	4.45	0.64	4.30	0.56	4.53	0.68	4.43	0.68
Modals 'should' and 'could'	4.5	0.50	4.28	0.55	4.68	0.53	4.50	0.64
Active and passive verbs	4.5	0.64	4.43	0.55	4.50	0.51	4.40	0.67

MCQ Reading Task Results

Independent samples t test results of the mean scores for the MCQ reading task indicated that the enhanced and the non-enhanced group's participants did not vary from each other significantly in comprehending the texts. The t test results demonstrated the following scores for textual comprehension according to the pairs of target forms and the texts that they were exposed to, such as for the articles $t(78) = 1.11$, $p = 0.269$ (Text A) and $t(78) = 0.66$, $p = 0.511$ (Text B); the modals $t(78) = 1.90$, $p = 0.062$ (Text A) and $t(78) = 1.34$, $p = 0.186$ (Text B); and the voice forms $t(78) = 0.56$, $p = 0.576$ (Text A) and $t(78) = 1.79$, $p = 0.077$ (Text B). Table 19.2 presents the descriptive statistics for text A and B comprehension scores. Therefore, these results suggested that TE had no negative impact on the participants' textual meaning comprehension.

Noticing Question

A Pearson's chi-square test results of the noticing question scores for the enhanced and non-enhanced groups revealed the following scores for noticing the uses of the target forms: $\chi^2(1, N = 80) = 8.90$, $p = 0.003$ for the articles, $\chi^2(1, N = 80) = 8.50$, $p = 0.004$ for the modals, and $\chi^2(1, N = 80) = 11.17$, $p = 0.001$ for the voice forms. The results of this test revealed that the enhanced and the non-enhanced groups varied significantly in noticing the targeted forms of the study.

Table 19.3 presents the cross-tabulation results of treatment and noticing question scores according to the treatment groups and the pair of target forms. These results demonstrated that though both of the groups noticed the target forms during the treatment sessions, the enhanced group noticed all the targeted forms significantly more than that of the non-enhanced group. Additionally, the highest amount of noticing occurred in the case of the targeted modals and the lowest amount of noticing occurred

for the targeted voice forms of the study. Therefore, through the multiple exposure to TE, the participant's noticing of the targeted forms was increased.

Grammar Tasks

The one-way ANOVA along with the partial eta squared results of the grammar task 1 (fill-in-the-blanks) for the targeted modals revealed that the treatment made quite a large effect on the achievement of the participants' gain scores for this task as the results were $M = 1.54$, $SD = 1.07$, $F(2,97) = 35.41$, $p = 0.000$, $\eta\rho^2 = 0.422$ (immediate post-test) and $M = 1.07$, $SD = 0.97$, $F(2,97) = 25.80$, $p = 0.000$, $\eta\rho^2 = 0.347$ (delayed post-test). Table 19.4 presents the descriptive statistics of different treatment groups for the gain scores of this task according to different pairs of target forms. Similar tests were also conducted on the gain scores of this task for the other target forms. The results for the articles revealed that though there was a large effect of treatment on the gain scores of these forms in the immediate post-test ($M = 1.02$, $SD = 1.01$, $F(2,97) = 22.12$, $p = 0.000$, $\eta\rho^2 = 0.313$), in the delayed post-test this effect size turned into a small one ($M = 0.55$, $SD = 0.78$, $F(2,97) = 1.90$, $p = 0.155$, $\eta\rho^2 = 0.038$). In contrast, the results for the voice forms indicated that the treatment achieved only a moderate effect on the gain scores of these forms in the immediate post-test ($M = 0.70$, $SD = 0.77$, $F(2, 97) = 8.44$, $p = 0.000$, $\eta\rho^2 = 0.144$) as well as in the delayed post-test ($M = 0.48$, $SD = 0.90$, $F(2,97) = 4.42$, $p = 0.015$, $\eta\rho^2 = 0.083$).

The post hoc Scheffé test for all the gain scores of this task further exposed that all the groups varied from each other significantly while producing the targeted modal auxiliaries in this task in both of the post-tests. However, it was also found that the TE and the input enrichment had an almost similar impact on the participants' production of the targeted articles in the delayed post-test, and on their production of the targeted voice forms in both of the post-tests as the enhanced and the non-enhanced groups' scores did not vary from each other significantly in these tests. Therefore, it was evident that the participants of the enhanced and the non-enhanced groups did not achieve sustainable benefits from their exposure to the articles and the voice forms in the study.

Table 19.5 presents the descriptive statistics for grammar task 2 (choosing the correct form task) in the immediate and the delayed post-tests according to the treatment groups and all the pairs of the target forms. A one-way ANOVA, partial eta squared, and a post hoc Scheffé tests were performed on the average gain scores of all the target forms. The results revealed that there were large effects of treatment on the participants' form recognition ability of all the forms, such as for the modals (immediate post-test $M = 1.95$, $SD = 1.26$, $F(2,97) = 73.24$, $p = 0.000$, $\eta\rho^2 = 0.632$ and delayed post-test $M = 1.27$, $SD = 1.2$, $F(2,97) = 81.27$, $p = 0.000$, $\eta\rho^2 = 0.636$); the articles (immediate post-test $M = 1.22$, $SD = 1.06$, $F(2,97) = 25.76$, $p = 0.000$, $\eta\rho^2 = 0.347$ and delayed post-test $M = 1.27$, $SD = 1.2$, $F(2,97) = 24.36$, $p = 0.000$, $\eta\rho^2 = 0.334$); and the voice forms (immediate post-test $M = 1.22$,

Table 19.3 Cross-tabulation of treatment and the noticing question's scores according to the pairs of target forms

Response	N and %	Indefinite and definite articles		Modals 'should' and 'could'		Active and passive verbs	
		Non-enhanced	Enhanced	Non-enhanced	Enhanced	Non-enhanced	Enhanced
Noticed	40	9	22	15	25	6	20
	100%	22.5%	55%	37.5%	62.5%	15%	50%
Not noticed	40	31	18	28	12	34	20
	100%	77.5%	45%	70%	30%	85%	50%

Table 19.4 Descriptive statistics for gain scores for the fill-in-the-blanks task according to treatment groups, target forms, and post-test

Target forms	Immediate post-test						Delayed post-test					
	Control (<i>N</i> = 20)		Non-enhanced (<i>N</i> = 40)		Enhanced (<i>N</i> = 40)		Control (<i>N</i> = 20)		Non-enhanced (<i>N</i> = 40)		Enhanced (<i>N</i> = 40)	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Indefinite and definite articles	0.25	0.91	0.75	0.78	1.68	0.89	0.20	0.83	0.60	0.81	0.55	0.71
Modals 'should' and 'could'	0.30	0.57	1.40	1.06	2.22	0.69	0.25	0.79	1.85	0.70	2.90	0.90
Active and passive verbs	0.10	0.64	0.75	0.78	0.90	0.71	0.00	0.91	0.43	0.98	0.58	0.71

SD = 1.06, $F(2, 97) = 35.22$, $p = 0.000$, $\eta\rho^2 = 0.421$ and delayed post-test $M = 0.65$, SD = 0.94, $F(2,97) = 9.55$, $p = 0.003$, $\eta\rho^2 = 0.164$). The post hoc Scheffé test of the gain scores of this task exposed that the enhanced group's performance differed statistically significantly from the non-enhanced and the control groups' performances in recognizing all the target forms in both the post-tests except for the voice forms. The enhanced group's mean scores did not differ significantly from the non-enhanced group's mean scores for the voice form recognition task in the delayed post-test. This finding indicated that the participants of these groups achieved similar long-term benefits from the treatment of the voice forms. In brief, it was evident from the results of the grammar tasks that the best performance of both the enhanced and the non-enhanced groups occurred for the targeted modal forms.

Discussion

The findings of the study regarding noticing were resonant with Smith's (1993) argument about increasing noticing by giving multiple exposures to the enhanced input since both enhanced and non-enhanced groups' noticing was increased. In addition, both the enhanced and the non-enhanced groups noticed the target forms to different extents as they achieved noticing scores for the targeted modal auxiliaries, the articles, and the voice forms consecutively. The participants' highest scores for the modals in the pre-test, the saliency of modals as free grammatical morphemes and their relative meaningfulness in terms of hypotheticality, and these items' lexical equivalent forms in the participants' L1 might have helped both the enhanced (62.5%) and the non-enhanced (37.5%) groups in noticing these forms at a higher rate (DeKeyser, 2005; Govindasamy, 2002; Nassaji, 2017). All this evidence found resonance with Nassaji (2017) and VanPatten's (2007) claim that learners' current level of L2 knowledge and processing ability and the target form's importance in interpreting the meaning of the texts could play a major role in directing learners' attention to noticing the target forms in the input. These findings were similar to the results of the previous studies conducted on TE and grammar learning by Izumi (2002), Jahan and Kormos (2015), Loewen and Inceoglu (2016), and Winke (2013) but remained in contrast to that of Indrathne and Kormos (2016) and Overstreet (1998), who had demonstrated that the TE was not that effective for directing learner's attention to noticing the target forms in the input.

However, due to the abstractness of the meaning of the articles, their non-saliency in the spoken form, and their absence in the participants' L1, both the enhanced (55%) and the non-enhanced (22.5%) groups might have noticed these forms less than the targeted modals (DeKeyser, 2005; Nassaji, 2017). Moreover, the least amount of noticing occurred for the voice forms as almost half of the participants of the enhanced group (50%) and the majority of the non-enhanced group (80%) did not notice these forms while reading the texts. Despite applying the TE technique, learners might not have noticed these targeted forms (Smith & Truscott, 2014). This kind of less noticing and non-noticing might have occurred since the participants might not have

Table 19.5 Gain scores for choosing the correct form task according to treatment groups, target forms, and post-tests

Target forms	Immediate post-test						Delayed post-test					
	Control (<i>N</i> = 20)		Non-enhanced (<i>N</i> = 40)		Enhanced (<i>N</i> = 40)		Control (<i>N</i> = 20)		Non-enhanced (<i>N</i> = 40)		Enhanced (<i>N</i> = 40)	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Indefinite and definite articles	0.10	0.91	1.20	0.76	1.80	0.94	0.05	0.76	0.30	0.91	1.30	0.61
Modals 'should' and 'could'	0.15	0.59	1.85	0.70	2.90	0.90	0.05	0.69	0.73	0.75	2.43	0.81
Active and passive verbs	0.20	0.41	0.47	0.60	1.35	0.62	0.05	0.82	0.50	0.55	0.87	0.76

had the adequate attentional resources available to focus on these grammatically complex forms after considering the textual meanings of the materials provided to them (Hulstijn & de Graaff, 1994; VanPatten, 2007). It might also be possible that the participant's previous exposure to traditional rule-based explicit instructions might have restrained them from noticing these target forms which were enhanced only implicitly (Cintrón-Valentín & Ellis, 2016; Nassaji, 2017). Therefore, a more explicit approach to teaching grammar would be required for increasing the noticing of the forms like the definite and the indefinite articles and the active and the passive voice. Additionally, these findings suggested that TE might have more chances of directing learners' attention to both salient and non-salient features in the input than input enrichment (Doughty & Williams, 1998).

All the evidence regarding the enhanced and the non-enhanced groups' performance in both of the post-tests on form production and form recognition-based grammar tasks collectively suggested that the TE was more effective than the enrichment of input in developing the participants' gain scores for only the modals in both immediate and future uses of the forms. This finding is similar to the findings of Jahan and Kormos (2015), Lee (2007), and White (1998), who showed TE's positive impact on participants' learning of the targeted forms. The weak performance of the enhanced group in terms of the gain scores for the targeted articles and the voice forms might have occurred due to their poor noticing scores for those items which might have ultimately resulted in their non-significant intake of those forms' form-function mappings in the study (Schmidt, 2001; Smith, 1993). Therefore, TE could not provide the participants with adequate support in the case of the grammatical development of these forms. This finding suggested that a minimal instructional procedure like TE might not be able to help the EFL learners in developing their learning of all the target forms as the explicit instruction was found to be more effective than the implicit ones in teaching complex and/or non-salient forms of the TL (Doughty & Williams, 1998; Nassaji & Fotos, 2011). This evidence regarding the impact of TE is similar to that of the findings of Izumi (2002) and Jahan and Govindasamy (2021), who found no significant effect of TE on participants' acquisition of the target forms.

Conclusion

The findings of the study suggest that TE might have differential impacts on learners' noticing and acquisition of the targeted forms according to the grammatical and learning complexities related to those items. Therefore, it can be concluded that while teaching the meaning and the use of free grammatical morphemes like the targeted modal auxiliaries, TE could be used for accelerating learners' noticing and thereby grammatical development of the targeted form-function mappings. Accordingly, the TE of input should be used in the textbooks of all levels so that learners can become accustomed to this implicit way of focusing on both targeted meaning and form simultaneously while reading any texts. This kind of combined processing

of meaning, form, and function would increase the chances of Bangladeshi learners' intake and acquisition of any targeted grammatical features. Critical discussion on the meaning and uses of the targeted forms in the texts can also be added to the lesson plans as post-reading activities since learners may have difficulties in understanding the functions of forms only through positive evidence like TE (White, 2015). Thus, learners may become less dependent on the memorization of chunks of grammar rules and feel more encouraged to explore the form-function mappings of the TL for developing grammatical accuracy. Overall, the EFL instructors of Bangladesh should develop in-depth knowledge about the learning difficulties related to different grammatical items so that they can make judicious use of the TE techniques in their EFL classes (Doughty & Williams, 1998).

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Chapter 20

Disruptive Perspectives and Re-invention: Why and How for the English Learners



Kalyani Samantray

Abstract In the twenty-first century, technological advances and increased access to such technology for educational purposes have resulted in fresh perspectives in education in general and ELT specifically. While technology gained momentum, the COVID-19 pandemic created extraordinary challenges for education and career prospects for generations to come in India. The dual perspectives of advanced technology and the pandemic-related chaos now force planners and executioners of ELT at different levels to envisage learning through the intervention of ‘disruptive techniques’ (Christensen & Bower, 1996). These techniques, utilised in business models, seem to hold the promise to reinvent our praxis by enabling learners to cope with the changing demands of the workplace and life. The areas of disruptive application considered here are: (i) providing quality education with opportunities for learning-to-learn and upskilling and (ii) providing equitable access to ESL education. This chapter discusses how the theory of disruptive innovations and the emerging techniques can leverage a forward-looking ELT model, particularly in the context of India. This model is expected to foster fair access to learning and nurture a system to stimulate learners whereby they prepare for real-life uncertainties through adaptability.

Keywords Disruptive techniques in ELT · Learning-to-learn · ESL · Equitable access

Introduction

The beginning of the twenty-first century enhanced the teaching–learning ecosystem through extensive and effective use of technology, increasing access to online courses and materials for students both in affluent countries and in not-so-affluent countries like India. In the first two decades of the twenty-first century, as technology came

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to be increasingly incorporated into education, on-campus activities remained dominant as students, teachers and anyone connected to the system interacted, studied and continued to be culturally active to fulfil their collective goals and commitments. Students and teachers understood face-to-face classroom interactions as providing the best opportunities for learning and skill development and saw technology support as an added advantage to this end. The COVID-19 pandemic turned this age-old pattern on its head creating unprecedented campus inaccessibility and other extraordinary challenges for education and career prospects for Indian students (Kantipudia, Mosesa, Aluvalub & Gouda, 2021). Access to learning through technology began to be the only recourse, although even with twenty-first century access to technology, providing quality education equitably to all sections of students remained an unachieved goal (Ainscow, 2020) in less affluent countries like India. This chapter discusses how the technological advances of this century can impact learning during and after the pandemic through the intervention of ‘disruptive techniques’ in the Indian perspective in general. Keeping the effects of technology and pandemic in view, the focus here are: what is being done in the sphere of education and what can be practical additions through ‘disruption’.

In the Indian context, teaching and learning processes have remained more or less constant over the past fifty years. Despite reforms in curriculum and teacher education, the approaches to teaching and learning have not changed in spirit. ‘What is being done’ is nearly the same as what used to be nearly fifty years ago despite the advent of a number of cognitive theories, learning-to-learn theories and learner-centric teaching theories. The ‘disruptions’ to be discussed in this chapter relate to India, one of the highly technologically advanced countries which happened to be one of the hardest-hit countries by the COVID pandemic. Beyond the staggering impact on human life, COVID-19 has greatly disrupted access to education in India (Vegas, Lee & Shrestha, 2021). Traditional classroom approaches and contemporary additions to the educational knowledge base have been impacted like never before, as elsewhere (Anderson, Bousselot, Katz-Buoincontro & Todd, 2021; Jung, Horta & Postiglione, 2021; Schleicher, 2020). The disruptions have changed the face of learning and skilling for the foreseeable future. The central and the local governments of India have started to minimise the gaps in equity and quality in education with better application of technology and newer skills for students to cope with the challenges related to jobs, communication, changing cultures and changing societies (NEP 2020, Government of India). I discuss here how another set of disruptive propositions may address the present chaos to advance learning goals and measure up to the unparalleled situations of the present times.

ELT in the Present Times

Providing quality and equity in education in general and in teaching ESL, in particular, pose similar problems everywhere (OECD, 2012; UNESCO, 2017). twenty-first century technological advancement has created both opportunities and drawbacks

for English learners (ELs). Accessing ELT materials and training has been handy for a group of students, but for many disadvantaged ones, the inaccessibility of technology has created a large gap in their learning prospects. The pandemic also contributes to the impairment of learning ESL for many ELs. Educational institutions and researchers now address these ELs' needs in innovative ways not thought of before (Uro, Lai, Alsace & Corcoran, 2020). One such innovation may be the application of disruptive technology (Christensen & Bower, 1996) to promote the learning-to-learn platform and equity for all ELs.

Christensen and Bower (1996) have discussed disruptive technologies to be innovative approaches that significantly modify the existing habits of producers and consumers. Although their innovations involve technology, the disruptive concept mainly deals with alterations in attributes that are superior to the prevailing ones. In this chapter, attention is drawn to certain altered principles of ESL teaching and learning for better outcomes and outreach, with available educational technology in India.

Theory of Disruptive Innovations

Disruptions can be of two types: harmful and beneficial. Learning new things is a disruption in itself, requiring accommodation of fresh ideas and skills and letting go of those that are not advantageous for one's purposes. Christensen and Bower (1996) proposed the theory of disruptive innovations as a model to reinvent management strategies not just for the immediate survival of businesses and industries but for their long-term robust existence. Addressing the question why smartly managed businesses lose their frontline position when they encounter changes, particularly technology-induced changes, they proposed this theory grounded on three crucial factors of customer demands, resource dependence and resource allocation. They suggest that to maintain the market lead, businesses ought to invent new approaches, including technology innovations, to target all customers. Approaches and technologies for which no customers, or very few, exist become redundant.

Disruptive technology is an innovation that significantly alters the way that consumers, industries, or businesses operate (Christensen, McDonald, Altman & Palmer, 2018; Gilbert, 2005). Such innovations replace existing low functional systems to meet the current demands and evolve to match with future demands. When the automobile industry, electricity, wireless and telephone services started, these presented disruptive technologies to radicalise transport, communication and related industries. Current instances of disruptive technology are Artificial Intelligence, machine learning, cloud computing and a variety of simple to complex apps. Christensen (1997), in his book titled *The Innovator's Dilemma*, propagated disruptive technologies even for start-up businesses with limited resources, who can utilise disruption in concepts to create products with mass appeal and in incremental upgrading to meet upcoming exigencies.

Disruptive Innovation for Quality Education

Although industries quite often adopt disruptive innovations, the idea of disruption is rather atypical in the education sector. Christensen, Johnson, and Horn, (2008) analysed why educational institutions find it difficult to innovate to cope with the changing times and how innovations could 'disrupt' educational systems to beget positive transformations. Individualised learning (Gardner, 1983) is an example of the disruption that holds the possibility of optimising learning achievements. How educational institutes can tailor to particular needs of learners has been a focus of the theory of disruptive innovations (Christensen et al., 2008).

The COVID-19 pandemic has multiplied the demands of societies all over to provide individualistic learning for all as institutions and learning opportunities are not accessible to many learners at present. This situation may not be precluded in the post-pandemic future, which is quite indiscernible to academics and planners. Certain disruptive approaches can tackle the challenges of individualistic learning, imparting ELs the skills for learning-to-learn. This is determined when learners take responsibility for their learning. As we understand the requirement for a new learning system to be created, teachers at all levels habituated with the conventional teacher-fronted classes and one-size-fits-all curricula may struggle with the new system and, in many cases, might also resist the modifications. Disruption requires transforming such resistance to accept a system that has lasting benefits for learners.

Disruptive innovation focuses upon replacing the run-of-the-mill curricula and rigid mindsets towards teaching and assessment. It offers superior teaching-learning features that would be observable by the learners, teachers and the community at large. It targets overlooked learner groups as much as it caters to the niche learner sections. The discussion, henceforth, will draw attention to the adoption and application of new approaches and technology in education for ESL. These applications are expected to teach ELs the skills to be independent learners, to dovetail their thinking to solve problems and to guide them to establish their long-term goals relating those to their studies. Disruptive techniques can be applied to equip students to be aware of their learning goals and pre-set those. Wherever possible, involving the local community in creating awareness of learning goals for their wards and making them responsible for their wards' achievements, even in small ways, can be positive disruptions for learning.

By and large, all kinds of disruptive techniques are inherently dynamic with the potential to evolve according to the exigencies that surface at different points of time. These techniques do not overlook an opportunity and do not cater only to the apparently 'intelligent' learners. Through innovation, the skills and the approaches to apply the skills get refined. For example, learners may be introduced to a simple skill of using emojis, which they can apply to replace complex linguistic expressions or vice versa. This is the essence of any disruptive approach.

Learning-to-learn

Academic institutions tend to treat all ELs to be similar so far as their learning patterns are concerned whereas research findings reveal how individuals are distinct in their psychological disposition and therefore, in the ways, they learn (Gardner, 1983; Piaget, 2001; Piaget & Inhelder, 1969). In the context of India, for example, overcrowded classrooms, prescribed methods of teaching and resource paucity compel schools and universities to settle to a single mode of instruction and evaluation. Such a move is perpetuated through inflexibility in the attitudes of planners and academics, who consider the fixed boundaries of traditional education to be a secure system. ESL learning that occurs under such conditions remains restricted to mostly the lower-order thinking skills (Bloom, 1956) to a remember-understand-reproduce routine. Critical thinking, analysis, problem-solving and upturning alternatives never integrate with this learning scheme. Higher-order thinking skills (Bloom, 1956) of analysis, problem-solving, rule application in new situations, questioning an existing concept and creation of new frameworks from old learning have almost no scope in the conventional setup. Learners simply *learn* what is given; they do not *learn the skills of learning* for their upward cognitive mobility.

Although the basic ESL skills of comprehension and remembering are essential for beginners, they must progress to inculcate the skills of analysing, questioning, debating and using advanced ESL skills. Both lower and higher-order skills must be operational independently as well as correlatedly in the learning platform. ELs cannot functionally use the higher skills if they always use the procedures of remembering and reproducing what is ‘given’ all through school and university. Both orders of skills initiate ELs into thinking independently for skill acquisition. Even skills, such as remembering and repeating, to be applicable on a long-term basis and to influence higher-order skills, should be taught in a manner where learners think, for example, what to remember and why. Asking and answering ‘why’ questions at all levels can be a disruption in itself. Table 20.1 displays sample lower and higher-order skills with their revised usage to complement twenty-first century ESL disruptive requirements.

Most learning systems teach skills in isolation, higher or lower, whereas in life there are no stand-alone issues that can be solved using only one skill or skills from only one domain. In certain problem-solving contexts, for example, the skills of active listening, analysis, creativity, communication and so on have to be used simultaneously. ELs exiting from a teacher-led, one-skill-at-a-time approach and a fixed-response system cannot gel different skills to handle the challenges they will face in real-life contexts.

Learning-to-learn techniques mainly engage ELs in practicing skills in combination and applying the skills in both regular and unusual situations. The techniques may include the following:

1. Learning through multiple pathways, e.g. listening to audio and transferring the information to a visual, a graphic, or a text
2. Learning and practicing, e.g. floor taking and floor giving in a discussion by analysing where to stop speaking and start listening and then taking the floor

Table 20.1 Sample lower and higher-order skills application with a twenty-first century focus

Learning-to-learn	Listening Speaking	Reading	Writing Creating
Lower-order skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remembering with understanding ‘why’ • Reproducing with an objective • Applying 	Factual <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What? • Where? • How? • When? • Which? 	Factual <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What? • Where? • How? • When? • Which? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choice of vocabulary • Spelling • Sentence structure • Punctuation
Higher-order skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applying • Analysing • Evaluating • Creating 	Disruptive applications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Justifying • Appraising • Analysing • Arguing/de-fending • Googling • Interviewing • Facilitating • Presenting 	Disruptive applications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Correlating/linking • Detecting • Interpreting • Evaluating/critiquing • Deducing • Questioning • Forwarding own opinion 	Disruptive applications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mind-mapping • Adapting a text from one genre to another • Composing through simulation • Googling • Animating • Developing new propositions • Creating projects/films • Not plagiarising

Based on Bloom (1956)

3. Teaching a peer/someone in the community to learn, e.g. basic English spelling rules or basic English conversation
4. Translating information from ESL to mother tongue/first language, e.g. helping someone understand facts from a conversation or text in English through translation into the local language
5. Using previous skills/knowledge to comprehend something new or related, e.g. locating topic sentences in new texts; understanding text cohesion
6. Gaining practical experience, e.g. using communication skills in a debate or a group discussion
7. Not struggling to remember, e.g. replacing mechanical memorisation with creating mnemonics to remember lists; creating logical connections to remember a process
8. Test-taking at short intervals, e.g. taking daily quizzes, completing short class assignments on time

Even while ELs acquire the core skills, *learning-to-learn* techniques can train them to understand their learning pathways and strategies, their skills and competencies and their strengths and weaknesses to assimilate new knowledge and skills independently. From dependence, they can move to become autonomous learners. ESL curricula should include this disruption to prepare learners to take learning on their terms.

However impoverished or deprived a context may be, creating space for learners to be responsible for their learning using the techniques of *learning-to-learn* is not impossible. The National Education Policy (2020) in India emphasises the importance of bridging the gaps in learning outcomes through access and equal participation in education. The policy also identifies the need to train learners and evaluate them for higher-order skills, such as analysis, critical thinking and conceptual clarity. This initiates a shift in the focus of assessments from being marks-based to competency-based. The outcome of learning would not be based on course completion but on conceptual clarity, application and creating new solutions.

A disruptive innovation of training learners to be responsible for their own learning can start from the onset of primary education. As the core hard skills of literacy are imparted to primary school children, the teaching focus need not be walled inside the classroom even at that level. Young ELs should be able to apply ESL skills in practical situations (Samantray, 2015). For example, in a primary class, a store can be set with children bringing any leftover/unused materials from home and naming them as grocery items, items of clothing and so on, ready for sale with price tags. They can create currency notes and small changes for shopping, think of their spending capacity, accordingly prepare their shopping lists and go shopping. They sell and buy items by applying numeral, literacy and communication skills to prepare currency notes and changes, shopping lists, discussing what to/not to buy, bargaining and so on.

The independence of skill application, the ESL creativity included in all the unscripted activities and the multidisciplinary numeracy and literacy approach generate disruption in pedagogy. Skills are neither taught in isolation nor practiced as given only in the textbook or as teacher-driven activities. The practices include hard skills being transferred to competency skills, social intelligence, humanistic thinking and so on.

This approach trains learners to think independently to solve problems by *learning-to-learn* and is applicable for all levels of ELs including the university. University ELs, for example, when they prepare projects, can conduct inter-faculty research to find out how the project may be enriched with an interdisciplinary perspective. They may conduct surveys to understand how viable their project may be in terms of market acceptance. These insights will disrupt the fixed mindset of going through the given motions of preparing and submitting a project. Students ought to comprehend the dimensions that enrich and influence their activity rather than simply produce a knowledge-reflecting procedure that fulfils the syllabus requirements. For example, ELs may create a literature-based project focusing on the legal aspects that would support women in distress. They may associate with law students to ensure genuine value in their project for society. Such projects focus on problem-solving, rather than satisfying just the syllabus demands.

From the lower-order skills of remembering and reproducing knowledge, mostly the knowledge confined to textbooks, the ELs can transfer ESL knowledge to the utility level.

Competency-Based Learning

As suggested by Levine and Patrick (2019),

Competency-based education (CBE) is being implemented at deeper levels in more schools every year. It is a major shift in school culture, structures and pedagogy focused on ensuring that all students succeed and addressing the fundamental shortcomings of the traditional model (p. 2).

CBE safeguards quality in ESL learning through a number of disruptions. Although the concept has been proposed for some time, the implementations have been rare and inconsistent. The curricula compliant with NEP 2020, India will attend to CBE for ESL competency.

Competency-based learning (CBL) derives from CBE to empower all students, including the ELs regularly, to make important decisions about their learning. CBL makes sure that learners receive timely, asynchronous support based on their individual requirements and learning pace. Individual ELs are initiated not just to learn ESL knowledge but to apply knowledge to validate their personal accomplishment and proficiency in using ESL. Learning outcomes, e.g. knowledge, adaptive skills and real-life use of skills, are to be presented to ELs in an explicit and transparent manner before the teaching instruction start, as the ELs need to understand that language skills are learnt to be used. Dynamics focussing on individual learning pathways and varied learning paces is encouraged. Student achievements are assessed on evidence of demonstrated ESL competence. Assessment accruing from the CBL system thus becomes a deep learning experience for the ELs. Assessments support learning through feedback that yields relevant evidence of learning to build ELs' future learning paths.

A series of webinars organised by the Ministry of Education, Government of India, highlight the salient features of the NEP 2020 that included the major recommendations regarding assessment reforms (PIB Delhi, Govt of India). Srivastava (2021) traced the timeline of assessment practices in India from the Pre-independence era to date. As he states, while National Policy on Education (NPE) 1968 recommended a shift in the focus of evaluation from certification to improvement in learning, NPE 1986 suggested de-emphasising memorisation and elimination of excessive elements of chance and subjectivity. Today, the New Education Policy 2020 (NEP, 2020) emphasises transforming assessment for optimising learning and development of all students. This bears a clear link to CBL and learner equity.

CBL acknowledges that ELs enter educational programmes—primary, secondary or tertiary—with different skills and different levels of achievement in those skills because each student has a different pathway and pace of learning (Cano & Garton, 1994; Chick, n.d.; Gardner, 1983). The disruptive technique of CBL emphasises these differences to prepare adaptive learning programmes for students. The motive is to stimulate student impetus to engage effectively with the ESL courses. NEP 2020 highlights CBL in the following manner:

... the following are the most relevant to inclusion of all children in education:

- Recognizing, identifying and fostering the unique capabilities of each student, by sensitising teachers as well as parents to promote each student's holistic development in both academic and non-academic spheres;
- Respect for diversity and respect for the local context in all curriculum, pedagogy and policy, always keeping in mind that education is a concurrent subject;
- Full equity and inclusion as the cornerstone of all educational decisions to ensure that all students are able to thrive in the education system ...

CBL disruptions create space for individualised educational processes expected to make learning efficient for more students by allowing them time to comprehend and practice a task or a learning point if they need so. ELs' learning paces derive from their conditioning for learning and their learning styles (Othman & Amiruddin, 2010; Riding & Grimley, 1999). Learners with a visual learning style may have psychological conditioning for linguistic intelligence. Their speed of learning will be faster if linguistic tasks are presented to them visually. The theories of learning styles and multiple intelligences can be coupled to present content and tasks to suit the variables of the learning preferences of students. Instead of presenting knowledge or information in a singular pattern, these theories capture disruptive opportunities to broaden the scope of learning and improve the pace of learning for a variety of learning styles. While it is critical not to classify ELs under fixed sets of intelligence or learning styles, ESL systems can create an enabled pedagogy that recognizes these unique needs and does not fit all to match the strict criteria of a traditional learning system.

Learning styles have been considered by Dunn and Dunn (1992) as 'the way in which individuals begin to concentrate on, process, internalise and retain new and difficult academic information' (p. 353). There are empirical studies by Cano and Garton (1994), Dunn and Griggs (2003) and Richardson (1994) that discuss how analysis of learning styles of low-achieving learners and appropriate interventions can enhance their academic performance.

Gardner's *Theory of Multiple Intelligences* (1983) challenges the concept of intelligence being a single entity as measured through IQ, recognizing only linguistic and numeric intelligence, perpetuated by education systems. Such a notion of acknowledging certain aspects of human intelligence and remaining unaware of, or consciously eliminating other intelligence, has been detrimental to learning. Many learners struggling with a writing task in the conventional linguistic format, for example, have been found to present their ideas graphically through a flowchart. They are simply more visually intelligent than being linguistically so and can present concepts better through graphics. Since learners are predisposed to different learning stimuli (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Hattie, 2011; Tomlinson, 2014), ESL learning should not cast them under fixed categories of intelligence, but extend how information and skills can be presented.

CBL expects learners to be aware of their intelligence and appropriate materials and approaches should enhance their learning opportunities (Hattie, 2011). For this to happen, dynamic databases of learner preferences and strengths and their emerging interests have to be constituted. These databases can create a better understanding

Table 20.2 Developing verbal-linguistic skills through other skills

Non-linguistic skills	Logical skill Activity: solving a crossword puzzle (visual, writing)	Visual skill Activity: creating a poster (visual, writing, speaking)	Kinaesthetic skill Activity: preparing a stage production (kinaesthetic, spatial, speaking)
Verbal-linguistic skill:	Word order	Planning the poster with mind maps	Discussion of props
Vocabulary development	Solving linguistic problems	Pictures/figures with matching short descriptions	Discussion of physical movements on the stage
	Critical thinking related to vocabulary	Explaining the poster to an audience	Discussion of dance steps

of what learners have actually learnt (Darling-Hammond, 2010) and are able to use. Comprehensive knowledge of learner-specific strengths, needs and areas of possible growth can fine-tune teaching instructions and materials (Tomlinson, 2014).

Studies (e.g. Othman & Amiruddin, 2010; Zain, Tamsir, Ibrahim, Poniran & Ghazali, 2019) have shown that learners tend to use more than one learning style. These are multimodal learners, who succeed better in settings that engage them with multiple learning styles interchangeably or simultaneously. Monomodal learners fare well if the stimulus offered conforms to their singular learning style. Table 20.2 exhibits how ELs with limited strength in verbal-linguistic intelligence can be helped to develop their ESL skills through their preferred intelligence and multimodal experience.

Educational institutions at all levels can use student dashboards, either in their LMS platform or manually, to track the progress of individual students. For example, a manual bar chart can display an EL’s average grade for different subjects that can assess the style and rate of their learning in various knowledge areas and skills matching with their intelligence types and learning styles. Such a form of data can support learning better by providing student-centred input.

One-teaching-time-for-all need not be a constraint for ESL teaching. twenty-first century technology supports the inclusion of asynchronous learning by students through their mobile devices to personalise their access to resources that suit their learning speed. These disruptions make the learning process more student-centric and efficient.

For CBL, a number of career and profession options are incorporated into the early childhood curriculum so that young ELs consciously discuss their career choices. This awareness supports them in planning their career and professional goals and the learning of ESL skills with a certain level of responsibility. Linking the ESL skills to jobs and professions will intrinsically motivate the ELs when they comprehend which skill will be used for what purpose and how their professional prospects will improve with a better level of language use. For example, active listeners understand and solve problems quicker than passive listeners.

Professionally-oriented ESL skill development can start from the primary classes disrupting the ongoing approach to teaching English language skills that have no bearing on the world outside. Young ELs can use graphic organisers, for example, for vocabulary enrichment. Learning to use such organisers early is a skill applicable for multiple purposes and multiple contexts throughout their life. Higher education institutions can connect ELs' professional goals and the curriculum by planning how they would groom students to make sure they can encash the curriculum.

Disruptive Practices and Reinventing

Reinventing one's knowledge and skills for application on demand has remained the only solution for anyone not to be redundant or irrelevant through life. Securing such skills is a self-driven activity. Making these factors salient to the ELs' attributes, learners, rather than teachers, must understand what to learn and how to apply that to solve problems. Disruptive learning is about being independent in one's learning and being solution-oriented. The twenty-first century demands have disrupted the traditional perceptions of learning to usher in the concepts of *learning-to-learn for reinventing to happen*.

Many individualised university courses, MOOCs and TED talks are free for anyone's access through smartphones and tablets. Depleted class attendance due to a variety of factors and the resulting reduced exposure to ESL can be countered by using these materials. Teachers need to coach ELs during class time on what to choose, how to choose and for what immediate and long-term purposes. This can initiate self-learning to keep pace with the world outside the school corridors. As they learn how to learn, they must also skill themselves to upgrade on demand. ELs with such strong self-learning impetus develop a heightened cognitive ability and outperform those who depend entirely on teachers and the prescribed resources. In this perspective, the teacher's role has to modify enormously to anticipate the evolving needs and generate a functional learning system. To train ELs to be self-driven, we need to create a disrupted psychological mindset in the formal teaching contexts. The training has to leverage intrinsic motivation and clarity of purpose for the learners. They should comprehend fully how self-learning and upskilling will achieve more for them. The training inputs can be created with a partnership with the learners so that they realise their role in such a scheme of education, where they are as much responsible for their learning as the system is.

A deep understanding of the twenty-first century learning objectives from the perspective of learners and a clear acceptance of those objectives by the educational planners and institutions, curriculum designers and teachers is required for this transition to happen.

Equity Through Disruptive Practices in ESL Learning

In educational contexts, ‘equity’ and ‘equality’ are normally used in a coterminous manner. Although there are overlaps in meaning, equality assumes to treat all learners at par and equity stands for providing academic support to all at the same level, be it resources, funding, or the learning environment to ensure that every child has an equal chance for success. Achieving true equity needs perspectives from the position of the system and from that of the individual learners. Equity in learning also entails policies and strategies that connect to local culture, policies, structures and local pedagogical systems. Yet, equity in education must also consider embedding global realities into their approaches to learning for all students, else the claim to equality would not be tenable.

Equity involves an understanding of the unique challenges and barriers faced by individuals or groups of learners and supports them accordingly to overcome those barriers. While these steps may not always ensure equal outcomes, the system should strive to ensure that every child receives an equal opportunity for success through an inclusive and fair approach. The first step for equity comprises several disruptive factors: (i) an understanding of a variety of teaching approaches for different learning styles of students and including those in the curriculum, (ii) a toolbox with a cluster of approaches to present content and skills to ELs, (iii) providing students with multiple avenues to access content to improve learning (Hattie, 2011) and (iv) offering them various ways to demonstrate their knowledge and skills applied to problems rather than the conventional, standardised pen-and-paper assessments of ESL knowledge. A clear awareness of ELs’ specific strengths, needs and limitations can facilitate individual growth (Tomlinson, 2014).

In India, most ELs grow up in disadvantaged conditions and face inequalities in ESL learning. They are more likely to confront a scarcity of learning resources that suit their learning style. Not possessing technology devices and not having internet connectivity adds to equity-related challenges. The initial move in ensuring equity for ELs should address these basic opportunity gaps. A well-equipped curriculum with supporting study materials can minimise the digital divide between those who can access online and other resources and the majority, who cannot. To this effect, the NEP 2020 proactively mentions:

Inclusive and equitable education—while indeed an essential goal in its own right—is also critical to achieving an inclusive and equitable society ... The education system must aim to benefit India’s children so that no child loses any opportunity to learn and excel because of circumstances of birth or background (p. 24).

Most educational institutions in India now conduct both offline and online classes for all subjects including ESL. This has become a necessity in the context of the pandemic. The classes are generally teacher-led and teacher-instructed ESL lectures mostly providing information and explanation. A large number of EL requirements of the present century already discussed are neither perceived nor addressed by the system at all levels and, consequently, equity, as is truly implied, has not been a real concern in either mode of teaching.

There are also unique, ESL-specific possibilities of learning loss while schools were closed for the COVID pandemic. A large proportion of ELs lives in communities without many opportunities of exposure even to listen to or speak in English. ESL exposure happens for them only in school circumstances. ESL isolation, when educational institutions are closed or when ELs cannot attend them, challenges equity for many ELs.

Certain attainable disruptive mechanisms can ensure opportunities for ELs living in challenged circumstances. For example, phone-pal groups among ELs can encourage them to chat with pals, exchange information on a task and report the procedure of information sharing and task completion to the teacher. Small group interactions like this would allow ELs to engage with peers and practice ESL skills. A variety in task types, inclusion of prompts and support materials will provoke thinking and participatory action. The key to ELs' success is to keep them interested and engaged with English for a variety of purposes, recreational, problem-solving, information-gathering and not just educational. For example, they can practice giving feedback on tasks, e.g. 'How was your experience?', 'What did you like to do?', 'What will you like to add to the task?', that replicate, e.g. the experience in wayside eateries such ELs are familiar with.

Adults in many ELs' communities may not have strong ESL abilities but possess a high level of first/other language abilities. They can be included by educators for interactions with their EL wards through whichever language/s they use. ELs' involvement with different languages will have several ESL learning implications, such as the transfer value of first/other language skills into the ESL territory, community interest in developing their children's ESL learning and so on. On an emotional platform, such involvements can assuage the stress and anxiety that ELs experience, either from the paucity of resources or from prolonged social isolation. Activities have to be designed in the ESL curriculum to foster ELs' dialogue with adults to include academic work and to support the ELs psychologically. Technology and internet connectivity, wherever available, can supplement other non-technology-based efforts.

Another practical approach for equity is to offer achievement-linked certification. ESL programmes can offer ELs certificates equivalent to the skills and knowledge they have learnt, not just the final degree or diploma for the totality of the curriculum learnt. This recognition will incentivise learning-to-learn for self-improvement.

Planners and curriculum designers have to understand and incorporate equity factors into ESL teaching. Ongoing teacher development programmes are also indispensable for this to happen (Darling-Hammond, 2010).

Conclusion

For providing quality with opportunities for learning-to-learn and upskilling and for equitable access to ESL education, attitudinal disruption throughout the entire instructional structure is crucial. Education has long been conservative and traditional, adapting to changes at a much slower pace than the pace at which the world

has moved. This happens because change always implies disrupting the convenience of the status quo. However, educators, particularly those in the field of ESL, cannot remain impervious to change because the present and the future of the ELs depend on action to tackle change in an ongoing manner. This has been strongly focused on by the Government of India in the New Education Policy 2020. However, the changes will benefit the ELs if and only when the curriculum and the course givers are ready to implement disruptions and challenge the status quo with an attitude to embrace the radical changes envisioned. The techniques of *learning-to-learn*, *continuous re-invention of oneself and upskilling to match the challenges* included in ESL courses will support the twenty-first century learning requirements as ELs in India confront life and career.

Before trying a positive disruption, normal human tendency counters it with a mindset that any change is either undoable or unproductive, although research evidence has always established that the world and its demands continuously change and adaptability and constant re-invention of skills are the keys to survival. Disruptions in ESL education might just be the right step for ensuring that the ELs are better prepared to face the uncertainties and the new realities of the pandemic and the post-pandemic world pervaded with technology.

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Part V

Assessment

Chapter 21

Practical Applications of Learning-Oriented Assessment (LOA)



Peter Davidson and Christine Coombe

Abstract While assessment serves many different purposes, traditionally the main aim of assessment has been to measure students' performance in order to make a judgment about placement, progress, achievement, or proficiency. However, examination boards, test-writers, and teachers have begun to explore ways in which testing can also be used to facilitate learning. In a learning-oriented assessment (LOA) approach, all assessment, both formal and informal, contributes to learning, and assessment is aligned with the curriculum. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss how assessment can be constructed to maximize opportunities for meaningful student learning in the classroom and become an integral part of the learning process. We begin by examining the importance of 'assessment for learning' in order to better understand how it has laid the foundation for LOA. After defining LOA, we turn to the main focus of this chapter, which is how to implement LOA in the classroom. We outline what teachers can do within an LOA framework before, during, and after an assessment, in order to facilitate learning. The final sections of this chapter address some of the criticisms that have been made against LOA and outline the implications of taking an LOA approach.

Keywords Learning-oriented assessment · Assessment for learning · Feedback

The Precursor to LOA: Assessment of, for and as Learning

Black and Wiliam (1998) published a seminal article that significantly challenged the way that testers and teachers viewed assessment. According to Black and Wiliam (1998), students who engaged in formative assessment on their courses achieved significantly better than students who only took summative assessments on more

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traditional courses. Consequently, this ground-breaking article led the way for a number of different research projects on assessment that sought to determine the impact that different types of assessment had upon learning, and ultimately led to the three distinctions of assessment of learning, assessment for learning, and assessment as learning (Earl, 2003). These three types of assessment can be differentiated according to the purpose of assessment, the expected outcomes, how results are reported, whether it is formative or summative assessment, when the assessment takes place, the type of assessment that is used, who is involved in the assessment process, and the type of feedback students receive.

Assessment of Learning (AoL)

Earl (2003) made the important distinction between assessment of, for and as learning. Assessment *of* Learning (AoL) is assessing students to measure how much they know. The purpose of this type of assessment is to gather evidence on what students have learnt during a particular course of study, in order to identify what standards students have reached, and to hold teachers accountable for the maintenance of these standards. The outcome of AoL is ultimately a judgment on what standards have been achieved by the students, and the results are interpreted and written up in a report for administrators, and may also be given to other key stakeholders such as head teachers, board of directors, parents, and government ministries. Results are expressed as a score, a percentage, or a grade, and students are often ranked according to their performance. What is important with AoL is the students' scores, and ultimately how many students passed, or reached the required standard, and how many did not. AoL is summative (Biggs, 1998), and it takes place at the end of the course in the form of a final exam or an achievement test. It is also very teacher-centered, students receive little or no feedback from their peers or their teacher, and very little learning occurs as a result of this type of assessment.

Assessment for Learning (AfL)

The purpose of Assessment *for* Learning (AfL), on the other hand, is to facilitate learning. Black, Harrison, Marshall, and William (2004, p. 10) define AfL as "any assessment for which the first priority in its design and practice is to serve the purpose of promoting pupils learning". In this approach, we assess students' progress on a particular course in order to diagnose their learning needs, and we adapt our teaching accordingly to meet those learning needs. Results of AfL are expressed as descriptive feedback or a description of each student's performance. With an AfL approach, we use the results of the assessment to inform teaching which can initiate differentiated instruction, personalized learning, and potentially curriculum

change. This type of assessment is formative in nature, and is implemented continuously throughout the course. A range of assessment measures is employed, such as diagnostic tests, progress tests, task-based tests, performance-based tests, scenario-based tests, projects, and portfolios. AfL necessitates interaction between the teacher whereby the teacher creates the assessment, the students complete the assessment, the teacher identifies the student's learning needs and gives feedback on the student's performance, and students take on board this feedback which facilitates learning.

Although criticized by Figueras (2005), Tomlinson (2005, p. 39) provides a useful list of all the things that a teacher can learn from their students when they take a test, which the teacher can then use to provide their students with useful opportunities for learning:

- what the students know and what they do not know (both explicitly and implicitly) about the target language
- what the student can and cannot do in the target language
- what progress the students are making
- what effect the teaching has had on the students
- what the students are likely to be able to do with the language in a target context
- what the students need to learn
- what can be done to help the students learn
- what the students know and can do in comparison with other students

The Assessment Reform Group (1999) identified “The big 5 principles of assessment for learning”, which was hugely influential in changing the way that testing boards, test writers, and teacher thought about assessment:

1. The provision of effective feedback to students.
2. The active involvement of students in their own learning.
3. Adjusting teaching to take account of the results of the assessment.
4. Recognition of the profound influence assessment has on the motivation and self-esteem of pupils, both of which are critical influences on learning.
5. The need for students to be able to assess themselves and understand how to improve.

Assessment as Learning (AaL)

It can be challenging to decipher the tenuous differences between AfL and AaL (Hume & Coll, 2009), and some researchers take the easy option of combining the two and using the terms interchangeably. However, it is worth teasing out the subtle differences between these two types of assessment. The major difference is that with an AaL approach, the purpose of the assessment is to not only facilitate learning, but also to engage students as critical assessors and develop themselves as independent learners. The outcome of AaL is ownership and empowerment as it is the students themselves, not the teacher that sets their learning goals. The teacher does give descriptive feedback on the performance of their students after they take

Table 21.1 A comparison of assessment of, for and as learning

	Assessment <i>of</i> learning	Assessment <i>for</i> learning	Assessment <i>as</i> learning
purpose	measure students learning; gather evidence; standards; quality assurance; accountability	facilitate learning; assess progress and learning needs; inform teaching	facilitate learning; engage students as critical assessors; develop independent learners
outcome	judgment; report	diagnoses; adapt teaching; differentiation; personalized learning; curriculum change	ownership; empowerment; students set their own learning goals
results	score; grade; P/F; S/U; comparing; ranking	feedback; description of performance; score	feedback; student-developed-learning plan
type	summative	formative	Formative
timing	end of course	during a course; continuous	during the course; continuous
mode	final exam; achievement test	diagnostic test; progress test; task-based test; performance-based test; scenario-based test; project; portfolio; dynamic assessment	student-generated tests; self-assessment; self-monitoring; self-regulation; self-reflection
involvement	teacher-centered	teacher/student-centered; interactive	student-centered
feedback	little or no feedback	teacher feedback	teacher feedback; peer feedback

an assessment, the students then develop their own learning plan. AaL is formative and is implemented continuously during the course, but the focus is very much on the student with student-generated tests, self-assessment, self-monitoring, self-regulation, and self-reflection. So while AaL places importance on promoting student learning in a similar way to AfL, it does so from a very student-centered perspective with student empowerment as the ultimate goal. Table 21.1 summarizes the differences between Assessment of, for and as learning.

Learning-Oriented Assessment

The LOA framework recognizes that in addition to measuring students' performance, an important purpose of assessment is to facilitate learning. As noted by Carless (2009, p. 80), "for all assessments whether predominantly summative or formative in function a key aim is to promote productive student learning". A crucial aspect of

the LOA framework is that it aligns assessment with all aspects of the curriculum, including the syllabus, teaching materials, teaching methodology, testing, and teacher training (Turner & Purpura, 2016). Cambridge Assessment English (n.d.), note that LOA emphasizes that all levels of assessment, (macro and micro) contribute in some way to both the effectiveness of learning and the evaluation of learning outcomes. In an LOA approach, all assessments, both formal and informal, should augment the learning process and help to facilitate student learning. As Saville (2013) noted in a recent talk, LOA prioritizes and locates learning at the heart of every assessment context.

Purpura (2013, p. 1) notes that “an LOA approach to assessment recognizes the symbiotic relationships among external standards, curriculum, instruction, learning, and assessment, and is concerned with the role that these synergies play in understanding learner performance, engagement, learning processes, and the attainment of learning success.” Similarly, Carroll (2017) proposes that LOA should be viewed as a framework that recognizes the dynamic connection between teaching, learning, and assessment in order to promote learning:

Learning-oriented assessment (LOA) is theorized as a development and validation framework for identifying the dynamic, interactive relationships between instruction, learning, and assessment in the classroom ... The orientation to learning in LOA prioritizes the use of positive and negative feedback on performance to moderate the relationships between learners and learning processes and the indicators of learning demonstrated by performance. The LOA framework also highlights the inter-relationships between instruction, learning, and assessment to both foster successful learning and guide the development of learning-oriented assessments. (p. 28)

The relationship between teaching, learning, and assessment that both Purpura (2013) and Carroll (2017) mention above is also highlighted in the LOA model proposed by Jones and Saville (2016). The learning objectives of a particular course inform the task that the teacher develops for their students. While the students engage in the language activity, the teacher observes, analyzes, interprets, and records what it is the students can and cannot do. The learning objectives that the students have achieved are noted in the record of achievement. However, more importantly, learning gaps are also identified, and this feedback influences the teacher’s decision-making and they set about modifying learning objectives and adapting their teaching to better meet their students’ needs.

Implementing LOA in the Classroom

Jones and Saville (2016) outline the steps in the implementation of LOA (see Fig. 21.1), which is initially informed by stance, language policy, and a theory of action. The implementation of LOA requires the coordination of teacher training, the curriculum, materials development, assessment, and the use of technology to identify learning gaps in order to build capacity. After monitoring progress and providing feedback to bring about further improvements, the impact of the project

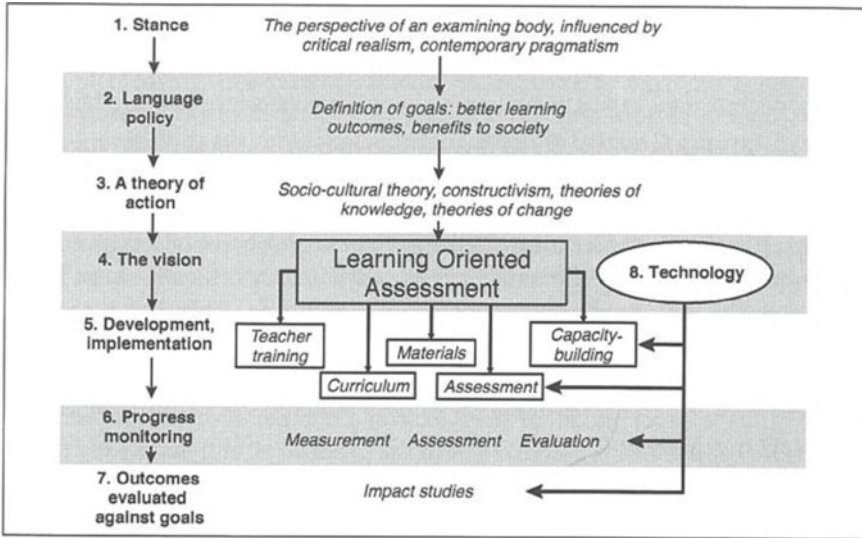


Fig. 21.1 Steps in LOA implementation (Jones & Saville, 2016, p. 117)

is then evaluated. Given that LOA has the potential to create numerous rich learning opportunities for students, the question that is often overlooked by researchers is, how can this actually be achieved in practice? In other words, how can we maximize the learning opportunities from an assessment for our students? In this section, we highlight what teachers can do to realize the full learning potential of LOA in their classrooms before, during, and after an assessment.

Before the Assessment

Timing of Assessment Tasks

Before the assessment, you need to consider the timing of assessment tasks and ask yourself how it might impact on learning. A summative assessment that is implemented at the end of the course, for example, is unlikely to promote any deep or sustained learning. Students often cram for summative assessments, which only results in surface learning. It is unlikely a teacher will see their students again after a summative assessment, so they will not be in a position to give them any feedback. Even if the teacher could give feedback on the summative assessment, the students are more likely to be only interested in the grade they got, rather than attending to any feedback they received. In order to facilitate learning, therefore, it is much better to use formative, ongoing, continuous assessment.

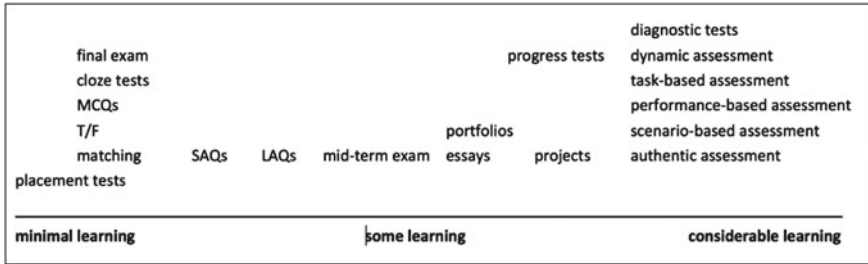


Fig. 21.2 The extent to which types of assessment and test task types facilitate learning

Number of Assessment Tasks

The number of assessments that a teacher implements can also significantly affect how much students learn. In order to maximize learning opportunities within an LOA framework, it is better to have a number of smaller low-stakes assessments during a course, rather than having one big high-stakes examination at the end of the course. This has the additional advantage of placing less weighting on a single assessment which in turn reduces test anxiety.

Choice of Assessment Tasks

The choice of assessment task is also crucial. Some types of assessment and some test task types lend themselves to facilitating assessment more than others. The cline in Fig. 21.2 is an attempt to differentiate the extent to which different types of assessment, and different test task types, facilitate learning. As can be seen on the left, very little learning takes place when a placement test or final exam is implemented. Test items such as a cloze test, multiple-choice questions (MCQs), True/False questions (T/F), and matching questions also do not lend themselves to facilitating learning. As we move along the cline, the use of portfolios, essays, progress tests, and research projects all produce some learning, but not significant amounts. At the far right are the types of assessment that are most likely to facilitate learning, and these include diagnostics tests, dynamic assessment (Hidri, 2014; Poehner & Paolo, 2016), task-based assessment (Norris, 2016), performance-based assessment (Bachman, 2002; Wigglesworth, 2008), scenario-based assessment (Carroll, 2017), and authentic assessment (Davidson & Coombe, 2010).

Use of Technology

Computerized assessment has huge potential to facilitate learning within an LOA framework, a point which is emphasized by Jones and Saville (2016). This is mainly

due to the fact that when students take a computerized test, it generates a lot of useful data which teachers can use to inform their teaching.

Transparency

There are a number of other things a teacher can do before an assessment to facilitate learning. An obvious strategy is to announce the test date to students and allow them time to study and revise for the test. Another strategy is to ask students if they want 20–30 min to revise before they begin a test. In order to enhance learning before an assessment, teachers need to be transparent about the assessment, telling their students when tests will take place, what areas the test will cover, the types of test questions that will be on the test, and the weighting of the individual test items.

Involvement of Students

Within an LOA framework, it is essential to involve students in the decision-making process of the assessment e.g. when an assessment will take place, what areas of the curriculum the assessment will cover, how long the test will be, how many questions there will be, what assessment task types will be used, the design of the rubric that will be used to score the test, and the weighting given to the individual test items and to the assessment overall.

During the Assessment

Adjust the Test Environment Conditions

Students can also learn while they are actually taking an assessment, but this will require some adjustment to the environmental test conditions. An assessment where students are sitting silently in rows taking an exam is unlikely to promote any form of learning. Assessment tasks that require students to sit in groups and learn from each other will more likely foster learning. Students should also be given a generous amount of time to complete the assessment if learning is to occur, rather than forcing students to rush through a test. Giving students access to additional resources and equipment, such as computers, the internet, online dictionaries, course materials, and the course textbook while completing an assessment, will also provide multiple opportunities to engage in learning. ‘Open book’ tests provide a wealth of learning opportunities for students because they are highly motivated to read in order to answer the questions. Allowing students to ask questions about the test while they are doing it, for example, the meaning of words, also promotes learning. Providing a glossary of terms on a reading test will also provide opportunities for students to learn new vocabulary.

Pair and Group Assessment

From time to time, we also use pair assessment and group assessment on a low-stakes classroom test, where a pair or a group of students are given one test to complete so that they can learn from each other during the test. We have, on occasion, given the whole class just one test to complete. Even on a low-stakes whole class test that is only worth 1 or 2% of the overall course grade, the amount of disagreement, lively discussion, animated debate and ultimately learning that takes place is obvious. Research on the amount of learning that takes place during pair, group, or whole-class assessment is scarce, but from our classroom observations, we would predict that the learning gains are quite substantial.

Tomlinson (2005, p. 45) suggests asking the following five questions at the end of a test, which is actually awarded marks, as a way of promoting learning through reflection:

- What do you think you have done well in this test? (4 marks)
- What problems have you had doing this test? (4 marks)
- What are you going to do to help yourself overcome some of these problems? (4 marks)
- What have you learnt whilst doing this test? (4 marks)
- What are you going to do to help yourself to learn more from this test? (4 marks)

After the Assessment

Provide Diagnostic Feedback

Finally, there are numerous learning opportunities to be exploited even after the assessment has taken place. One obvious thing to do is once the teacher has marked the test, is to give it back to the students and go over the answers with them. While some students are only interested in receiving their scores, some students will want to learn where they went wrong and how they can improve on the next test.

Get Students to Write the Answer Key and Rate Their Own Assessments

Other techniques which can be used to promote learning after students have taken a test are to get the students to write the answer key for the test, and to get students to mark their own tests. Smith (2009) explains that after marking a classroom test and recording the students' scores, she then gets her students to take the test again in groups, where a significant amount of learning takes place. While in these groups, she gets her students to generate an answer key, which they then use to mark the group test. She then averages the score she gave, and the score the student got on the group test, to calculate the students' actual final score. As Smith (2009, p. 30)

notes, “Testing activities can become learning activities when students are informed partners in the assessment processes”.

Let Students Redo the Assessment

One of the most effective ways to facilitate learning after a test is to allow students to redo the test. When exploited the right way, letting students redo a test can be an opportunity for students to make huge learning gains. For example, if many students in your class have failed a test, the opportunity to repeat that test will act as huge motivation to revise and study for that test. Furthermore, the teacher can identify areas of the test that the students did poorly on and re-teach that material. No doubt students will pay attention during those lessons where the teacher is re-teaching material that will be on a test that they are able to retake.

Analyze Test-Path Data

Another useful bit of information that teachers can look at when their students take a computerized test is test-path data. This data gives the teacher valuable information on which questions the students answered first, which questions they skipped and went back to later, how long they took to answer a question, and if they changed their answers to a question. This test path data is useful because it tells us more than whether the students got the answer correct or not. It tells us something about how confident, or unconfident, they are about certain questions on the test.

Personalize Learning

Perhaps one of the most powerful ways that computerized testing can enhance student learning is that students can get instant feedback on their test performance, and this feedback can be used to personalize and individualize their learning. So rather than having thirty students in a class, all with different knowledge, skills, competencies, and learning needs, all following the same curriculum in the same lock-step fashion, students could do the final exam on the first day of the course, identify their individual learning needs, and be given their own personalized course that caters to their specific learning needs. Immediately after taking the final exam, students could receive extensive descriptive feedback on what they can and cannot do, be provided with links to relevant teaching material to meet their individual and unique learning needs.

Criticisms of LOA

Negative Backwash

It is widely accepted that assessment does have a backwash effect, significantly impacting on teaching and learning, and it also has major consequences beyond the classroom (Taylor, 2005). Some teachers complain that testing gets in the way of teaching and that it has a negative washback effect. As noted by Taylor (2005, p. 154), “Negative washback is said to occur when a test’s content or format is based on a narrow definition of language ability, and so constrains the teaching/learning context.” Furthermore, Knight (1995, p. 11) contends,

The assessment of student learning has often been seen as a harmful and tiresome necessity. Tiresome, because of the amount of work it imposed upon learners and tutors and because it seemed to get in the way of worthwhile learning; harmful because it seemed to encourage cramming, superficiality and conformity.

However, it is important to recognize that washback can also be positive. An LOA approach seeks to stimulate a positive backwash effect. As noted by Biggs (1999):

While backwash is almost invariably seen as negative ... learning for the test is only bad learning if the test is bad. Students’ learning may also be as good as the assessment tasks they are given, in which case the backwash becomes positive. The basic principle of good assessment, then, is to ensure that the assessment is aligned to the curriculum ... Backwash works positively when the assessment tasks are deliberately and firmly referenced to learning standards contained in the curriculum. In preparing for the assessments, students will then be learning the curriculum. (p. 141)

Too Much Testing

Some teachers complain that there is already too much assessment, and that an LOA approach will just add more assessment to a curriculum that is already loaded with a lot of tests, quizzes, and assignments and take valuable time away from teaching. However, the issue is not so much that there is too much testing, but rather that there has been too much bad testing (Ebel & Frisbie, 1991). Assessment can be highly motivating for many students. Students take tests seriously and spend many hours studying and revising for them. Some students even like tests, and view them as a way to demonstrate their knowledge. As noted above, assessment can have a positive washback effect and facilitate learning if it is focused on learning outcomes and based on the curriculum of a particular course if it occurs continuously throughout a course and if the type of assessment implemented and the test task types are appropriate.

Teaching to the Test

Another concern that teachers have expressed about LOA is that it is seen as 'teaching to the test', which they regard as a negative thing that should be avoided. However, teaching to the test is not necessarily a bad thing if the test specifications of the test are based on the curriculum of the course, and the type of test task used is one that is more likely to facilitate learning. In this instance, teaching to the test is likely to have positive outcomes. Negative attitudes toward teaching to the test are more likely to concern the practice of a teacher basing their teaching solely on tests, and focusing primarily on teaching test-taking strategies and the overuse of practice tests in the classroom.

Ineffectiveness of Feedback

A potential criticism of LOA is that it relies heavily upon students receiving feedback from their teachers or their peers, and the efficacy of this feedback has often been called into question (Gebriel & Brown, 2020). For example, Shao (2015) maintains that teachers' providing feedback on the writing of students is a waste of time, and Truscott (1999) even notoriously claimed that it can actually be harmful for them. However, Davidson (2020) argues that giving feedback can be effective, but its effectiveness depends upon a number of variables such as how the feedback is given when it is given, whether or not students are ready to use the feedback they receive in a meaningful way, and the quality and quantity of the feedback provided.

Davidson (2020) provides a number of recommendations on how to make feedback more effective. Using a combination of self, peer, and teacher feedback is a good way to increase the likelihood that the feedback students receive will be effective. Peers can provide each other with valuable feedback, which helps them develop their editing skills and become better writers (Liu & Hansen, 2002). Group feedback and class discussions can also be useful ways for students to access multiple sources of feedback (Boughey, 1997). Teachers need to train students how to give and receive feedback, provide a specific focus for peer feedback, and monitor it carefully. Teachers and students need to focus on giving different types of feedback at different stages of the writing process. For example, early on in the writing process, feedback should focus solely on content and organization, and on subsequent drafts, feedback should focus more on the surface linguistic features. Teachers and peers should focus on the quality of the feedback, not the quantity, focusing their feedback on two or three key issues at one time (Sheen, 2007). In order to be effective, feedback should be reasonably detailed (Ferris & Roberts, 2001), clear and specific, and should balance constructive criticism with praise (Hyland & Hyland, 2001).

Teachers' Lack of Assessment Literacy

A final area of concern regarding LOA is that the vast majority of teachers are not sufficiently assessment literate to meet the assessment demands an LOA approach necessitates. In other words, most teachers do not have the knowledge or skills to write effective assessments, analyze and interpret the results, identify learning gaps, and make the necessary pedagogical changes to improve their students' learning. If teachers are to work within an LOA framework, however, it is likely that they will need additional training on the key concepts of assessment, the design and construction of assessments, and the analysis and interpretation of assessment results.

Implications of LOA

There is no doubt that taking an LOA approach requires a paradigm shift in the way we think about, devise, implement, and interpret assessment. With an LOA approach, there is obviously a greater emphasis on assessment 'for' learning as opposed to assessment 'of' learning. As such, with LOA there is a focus on formative rather than summative assessment. There is also a greater emphasis on diagnostic assessment and alternative assessment methods. The importance of teacher and peer feedback becomes significantly enhanced as they are central to the approach. The final implication of LOA is that there is a need for research to determine the impact that it has on teaching and learning, and whether or not it is an effective approach to assessment.

Conclusion

Assessment is not just about measuring students' learning, gathering evidence, making judgments, assigning scores, assuring quality, and maintaining accountability. Assessment also provides learners with significant learning opportunities. As has been demonstrated throughout this chapter, LOA has the potential to unleash a myriad of learning experiences for learners. As noted by Boud (2000, p. 159), "Every act of assessment ... has more than one purpose. If we do not pay attention to these multiple purposes we are in danger of inadvertently sabotaging one or more of them." Assessment provides teachers with an excellent opportunity to facilitate learning, a valuable opportunity that we should not waste. For many years, teachers have been using assessment to diagnose their students' strengths and weaknesses, and they have been adjusting their curricula and teaching accordingly. Teachers have also been using assessment to motivate students, and using assessment to facilitate learning. It is a real positive that testing organizations such as Cambridge English

Testing, The Educational Testing Service, and Pearson have begun to recognize the power of assessment to enhance learning.

The real potential of LOA is fulfilled when it augments, rather than replaces, traditional summative assessment. When you get the assessment right, and when you align teaching, learning, and assessment within an LOA framework, the potential for student learning is unlimited. When assessment is an integral part of the teaching–learning process it can have a significant positive impact on students’ learning. LOA requires a shift in the way many testers and teachers view assessment. It requires a different set of test conditions and task types than traditional summative assessment, and the adoption of what Tomlinson (2005) refers to as ‘learning validity’, namely the extent to which a test promotes learning. As testers and teachers, we need to develop assessment tasks and adapt environmental testing conditions in order to provide our students with multiple opportunities to learn from assessment.

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Chapter 22

Exploring Assessment Literacy of Tertiary-Level Teachers in Bangladesh



Rubina Khan

Abstract Assessment literacy is a vital component of teachers' professional development. However, it is often treated with negligence in teacher development programmes in different assessment contexts across the world. In Bangladesh, this area has not been well researched. The study presented in this chapter explored the current state of assessment literacy of tertiary-level teachers of English departments in Bangladesh. The aim was to gauge their awareness of assessment issues, concerns and procedures. Amongst other issues, teachers were asked to share their views regarding the purpose and the types of assessment, their current practices, training received and their confidence level about assessment. Data were collected from 67 university teachers through survey questionnaires and focus group discussions were also carried out to gather in-depth views of teachers. The findings show that teachers viewed assessment largely as a measurement of learning, they lacked assessment training and were not fully confident about their assessment practices. The study recommends the incorporation of compulsory assessment training as an integral part of pre-service and in-service teacher professional development programmes. The chapter concludes by suggesting that institutional support and extensive research on the assessment practices of teachers are required for the delivery of effective assessment.

Keywords Assessment literacy · Professional development · Assessment literate teachers · Higher education

Introduction

In the world of learning and teaching, teachers regularly engage in assessing students—they set questions, devise tests, mark examination papers and publish results on a regular basis. And yet the question arises: how many among these assessors possess sound, adequate and current knowledge and skills about assessment

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issues? Specific assessment skills are regarded as an essential part of the repertoire of the professional educator, be it for classroom-based or large-scale assessment. These are therefore increasingly being incorporated into professional learning and instructional practices around the world to ensure effective performance.

At most higher education institutions (both public and private) in Bangladesh, the teaching–learning and assessment systems mainly follow the traditional approach with minimal focus on the attainment of student learning outcomes. The Bangladeshi assessment landscape is examination-driven and focuses on results (Khan, 2021). Classroom teaching generally focuses on rote learning, non-creativity and passivity of students, which acts as an impediment to higher-order critical thinking and soft skills development (English in Action Report, 2009; Khan, 2010). Teachers and students have an exam-oriented mindset and assessment is conducted mainly through written exams and short viva-voce, thus offering fewer opportunities for feedback to students apart from conventional grades. A similar view has been echoed in the excerpt shared below:

The curriculum does not give any directives to a course instructor in assessing student learning. The instructor sets questions to measure what students know about the subjects. Grades are assigned after aggregating the mark obtained in ... class tests and written examinations. (Hasan, 2019)

Das, Shahin, Shrestha, Rahman, and Khan (2014) noted that one of the major road-blocks of assessment reform in Bangladesh is teachers' lack of assessment literacy. A recent study by Rahman and Khan (2021) highlights the absence of assessment literacy amongst secondary school teachers and testers. Islam, Hasan, Sultana, Karim, and Rahman (2021) observed that in Bangladesh, a basic area of concern has been the exclusion of teachers' voices in assessment policy formulation. They added that the assessment literacy of teachers is in an unsteady condition. One faculty member of a premier university expressed his dilemma about the current state of educational assessment: 'I have literacy of appropriate assessment but am unable to practice since I am restrained by institutional constraints' (Islam, 2019).

Institutional training and teacher development opportunities for teachers are limited at higher education institutions in Bangladesh. At the tertiary level of education, professional development opportunities are scarce and only occasionally provided for a limited number of teachers (Rahman et al., 2019). There is hardly any provision for pre-service or structured in-service training programmes for teachers. New teachers generally undergo a half-day orientation programme. Some training programmes which are one-shot or day-long are available centrally and offered at long intervals by universities. For example, the Centre of Excellence in Teaching and Learning (COETL) of Dhaka University offers sporadic and periodic training. In the context of Bangladesh, the graduate and post-graduate programmes in TESOL/ELT may be considered to constitute part of the pre-service training for English language teachers. These initiatives include a minimum focus on practical aspects of assessment. Apart from a couple of available scholarships (e.g. Commonwealth, Hornby,

Fulbright), teachers usually on their own initiatives apply for scholarships or self-fund their studies to obtain higher degrees. These qualifications fall into the category of in-service training.

It is to be noted that at the tertiary level teachers are responsible for all phases and stages of the test development and test administration process, i.e. pre, during and post-assessment tasks, including question setting, moderation, administration, grading and publication of results. Consequently, teachers need to be assessment literate to carry out these series of interrelated assessment activities effectively and efficiently.

No significant study has been conducted to date to investigate the assessment literacy level of teachers at the tertiary level in Bangladesh. Several studies pertaining to the assessment landscape of the secondary level of education have been previously conducted (e.g. Farooqui, 2021; Khan, 2021; Khan, 2010; Rahman & Khan, 2021). Only one study captured the state of assessment literacy of teachers at the secondary level (Sultana, 2019). To fill in this conspicuous gap in research in the area, this study attempted to explore the current state of assessment literacy of tertiary-level teachers in Bangladesh. This research aimed to gather teachers' perceptions regarding various aspects of assessment to have a better understanding of teachers' awareness and practice of assessment literacy.

Review of Literature

The concept and practice of assessment literacy are seen as extremely vital for teachers as they have to conduct a gamut of assessment tasks ranging from designing, setting, administering and evaluating tests for both classroom-based and final examinations. Assessment literacy refers to teachers' understanding of the knowledge, skills and principles (Davies, 2008) necessary for assessing student learning along with the know-how of what to assess, how to assess, the potential problems, and the way out (Djoub, 2017; Koh, Burke, Luke, Gong & Tan, 2018; Stiggins, 1991, 1995; Taylor, 2009). Moreover, importance is placed on teachers' ability to make informed decisions in assessing students' achievements and using assessment data to support learning. Additionally, assessment literacy is perceived to include factors such as stakeholders' skills to design and implement theoretically sound language assessment, ability to interpret and share results with other stakeholders, ability to use test interpretation data to make important decisions to improve students' learning and an awareness of the socio-cultural, political-ethical consequences of assessment (Coombe, 2018; Fulcher, 2012; Inbar-Lourie, 2008). Assessment, when used in the right manner, fosters student learning (e.g. Brookhart & Chen, 2015; Shepard, 2000) and as such teachers need to be assessment literate in order to provide improved language instruction, maintain standards and deliver quality education (Coombe, 2018). Training on developing assessment literacy seems to be indispensable for developing assessment literate teachers (Giraldo, 2018; Jeong, 2013; Looney, Cumming, Kleij & Harris, 2017).

Studies conducted in a range of contexts reveal low or inadequate levels of assessment literacy skills of teachers. A study by De Silva (2021) in the Sri Lankan context explored the assessment literacy and assessment practices of secondary school teachers and found that teachers, in general, had low assessment literacy and that their practices of designing, administering and scoring tests was not satisfactory. It was also noted that some teachers had no training on assessment principles but still were expected to design tests. Comprehensive teacher training programmes and online courses in testing and assessment were recommended for teachers. A study in Turkey by Ölmezer-Öztürk, Öztürk, and Aydın (2021) shared Turkish EFL teachers' problems related to their assessment practices with a particular focus on assessment literacy. Though language teachers in Turkey are responsible for all kinds of assessments their exposure to assessment training was reported to be very limited. The study recommended support for teachers who already have assessment background knowledge and a call for involving teachers, trainers and policymakers to collectively address the assessment literacy challenge. A study by Koh et al. (2018) on Chinese language teachers reported that teachers were not aware of the learning goals of the test items and became aware only after participating in a professional development programme. In the Saudi Arabian context, Umer, Zakaria, and Alshara (2018) found that there was a gap between university teachers' assessment practices and intended learning outcomes. It was revealed that the assessment tasks tested memorization and ignored higher-order thinking skills. The study identified low assessment literacy skills of teachers and made recommendations for teacher training in this regard. A study by Vogt and Tsagari (2014) on assessment literacy of foreign language teachers in the European context revealed that due to lack of adequate support from teacher education programmes teachers did not seem to be ready to discharge assessment-related tasks. They followed the assessment-related practices of their predecessors, colleagues and mentors. In the context of Bangladesh, Sultana (2019) explored secondary-level school teachers' perceptions about assessment literacy and their readiness for performing testing tasks. The results showed that teachers' understanding of the purpose of the assessment was limited and their inadequate testing background prevented them from delivering assessment-related tasks efficiently. All of these studies underscore the importance of training initiatives for developing teacher assessment literacy.

Factors arising from particular teaching contexts may affect the implementation of assessment knowledge by teachers. A study in Indonesia by Zulaiha, Mulyono, and Hamka (2020) examined junior secondary school teachers' perceptions of classroom-based assessment. Findings revealed that teachers had appropriate knowledge about assessment principles but gaps were identified in the implementation and monitoring stages. For instance, teachers' use of assessment materials and feedback was found to be problematic. Another study conducted by Esfandiari and Nouri (2016) in the context of Iran discovered that university instructors' teaching methods and assessment skills varied in terms of not only the amount of training received on assessment but also factors such as modes of evaluation, the purpose of assessment and psychometric features of the test. Coombe, Vafadar, and Mohebbi (2020), in their review

article, report the inadequacy of the training programmes highlighting the inadequacy of the contextual knowledge and the focus on generic assessment courses only which is insufficient to build an assessment knowledge base.

The review of the literature presented above brings to light several insights. Firstly, possession of adequate knowledge about assessment-related aspects and skills is fundamental. Secondly, the general assessment literacy level of teachers in the studies discussed above does not seem to reflect a satisfactory state of affairs. Thirdly, only awareness and knowledge about assessment literacy is not enough, rather it needs to be translated into practice for better student learning outcomes. Fourthly, specific training geared towards developing assessment skills is deemed imperative for assessment-related tasks and effective delivery of teaching and learning. Finally, assessment knowledge and contextual factors that affect the implementation of assessment literacy need to be addressed. Despite the body of increasing research in this area to date, there is still a scarcity of studies, particularly in the context of Bangladesh. It is against this backdrop that the current study was designed. The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the tertiary-level teachers' understandings of the various concepts related to assessment?
2. What are teachers' views of assessment-related training?
3. What are teachers' current practices concerning test design, administration and scoring?

Methodology

Participants and Instruments

The study is exploratory and adopted a mixed-methods design. A questionnaire comprising closed questions was administered to 67 Bangladeshi university teachers of whom 40 were female and 27 were male. 28 of the respondents were from public universities of Bangladesh whereas 39 were from private universities. The respondents had specialization in either English Literature (27) or Applied Linguistics & ELT/TESOL (38) or both (2) and had varying levels of teaching experience. Out of 15 FGD respondents, seven had degrees in ELT/TESOL and seven in English Literature. Table 22.1 shows the demographic profile of the participants.

The purpose of the questionnaires was to gauge teachers' awareness about assessment issues, concerns and procedures. Amongst other issues, teachers were asked to share their views regarding why, how and what they assess, the types of assessment they use, their current practices and their confidence level about assessment. Piloting procedures were followed: the questionnaire was trialled on a group of teachers and based on their feedback modifications were made. In order to gain an in-depth understanding of respondent perceptions, three focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted with five teachers in each group (see Table 22.1).

Table 22.1 Participants' demographic information

Attributes		Survey	FGD
Total Number		67	15
Gender	Male	27	8
	Female	40	7
Experience	26-above years	6	3
	21–25 years	4	2
	16–20 years	4	2
	11–15 years	13	2
	6–10 years	16	3
	1–5 years	24	3
Institution	Public	28	6
	Private	39	9
Specialization	Applied linguistics and ELT/TESOL	38	7
	English literature	27	7
	English literature and applied linguistics and ELT/TESOL	2	1

Teachers were informed about the purpose of the study and were assured of strict confidentiality of their responses. Those who agreed to participate were requested to sign a consent form and fill out the survey questionnaires. For the FGD interviews, schedules were drawn keeping in mind the convenient date and time of the respondents. The duration of each interview was between 35–45 min and the interviews were recorded with prior permission from respondents.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed into thematic categories arising within and across the groups' views. The most common thematic categories emerging from the data across teachers and instruments are presented in the findings below.

Findings and Discussion

Understanding of Assessment

The majority (67%) of the respondents perceived assessment to be a measurement of student progress, 18% thought that assessment involved teaching and testing, whereas only two teachers believed that it is simply administering tests to students.

Another two respondents perceived that assessment involved both administering tests to students and measurement of their progress. Again, one respondent understood that assessment involved administering tests, measurement of student progress and teaching and testing. Three teachers defined assessment as preparing and administering tests, evaluating and measuring student progress, determining their proficiency levels, understanding learning outcomes as well as offering constructive feedback to students.

FGD participants expressed similar perceptions about assessment. Interestingly, some teachers pointed out that students' performance needs to be measured and one specifically stated that it can be measured '*formally through formal tests as well as through teachers' personal impression gained as a result of teaching and interacting with students*'. Another participant commented: '*assessment is complementary to teaching. In fact, teaching and assessment are inseparable*'. Yet another remarked: '*If we test, it is obvious that we will have to check examination scripts and publish results.*'

As is evident from the survey and FGD findings, teachers have a limited understanding of the concept of assessment which is a more comprehensive term. As Rogier (2014) notes, 'the ultimate purpose of assessment is to improve student learning, as opposed to just being able to give a mark for the amount of course content a student has mastered' (p. 3). Only 6% of the teachers understood assessment as a notion that includes not only measurement of learning but also knowledge of test construction and administration, understanding learning outcomes and providing constructive feedback. It may be pointed out that none of the teachers see assessment as a tool for improving teaching-learning approaches or boosting learning motivation among students.

It was found that the concept of assessment corresponded largely to measuring student progress. It is used basically as a measuring tool similar to testing and the view that it can be used as a basis for improving teaching, learning and motivation needs to be emphasized more in Bangladesh. The reason for this kind of understanding may be perhaps buried in the fact that respondents did not receive specific training geared towards using results to improve teaching and learning.

Training on Assessment

As the survey data revealed, although the majority (64%) of the respondents received training on assessment, nearly two-fifths (36%) of them did not receive any training. Again, of the teachers who reported having received assessment training, two-thirds (65%) received in-service training, one-third (30%) received pre-service training and only two teachers received both pre-service and in-service training. In terms of duration of the training, a third (30%) of them attended long courses (6 months to one year) on assessment training, 26% attended only one-day workshops, 16% attended brief courses (of 1–2 weeks), 12% attended short courses (of 1–3 months) and 14% attended both short and long courses. One FGD participant highlighted

the inadequacy of the pre-service training received and the usefulness of his prior experiences of being assessed by his teachers:

I set questions and mark scripts according to my own experiences of taking tests and receiving teacher feedback and grades on my scripts in school, college and university.

Another teacher remarked:

Most of us develop a sense of testing from our student life. We sat for exams and were evaluated by our teachers who gave us marks or grades. Some teachers try to read books on testing for their personal interests.

These findings are corroborated by those in the studies of Berry, Sheehan, and Munro (2019) and Smith, Hill, Cowrie, and Gilmore (2014), where teachers reported learning how to assess from their personal experiences. Moreover, similar findings were observed by Tsagari and Vogt (2017) which revealed that teachers lacked the preparation of performing assessment-related tasks due to lack of institutional support and followed the assessment practice of their mentors or colleagues.

Both pre-service and in-service training is important. Pre-service training may enrich the theoretical knowledge base. For instance, Al-Kharusi, Kazem, and Al-Musawai (2011) found pre-service teachers had greater theoretical knowledge of assessment than in-service teachers. In-service training, on the other hand, may have a more practical function focusing on relating the theoretical knowledge to the teacher's own classroom context.

Findings showed that the majority of the training/courses attended were short courses ranging from one day to three months. These may have failed in promoting effective professional development as professional development is more effective when offered over a sustained period instead of one-shot one-day workshops (William & Thompson, 2008).

Over a third (33%) of the respondents reported to have received training from their own institutions and 16% received training from abroad. 5 were trained through self-study; four were trained in teachers' training institutes; four received training from other institutions; only one took online courses on assessment. Only eight received training from more than one source.

Most FGD participants claimed to have received no training facilities from their institutions. However, those who reported receiving training termed it to be insufficient, as is evident in one teacher's comment:

We have received no training per se but some guidelines from our respective institutions. We are supposed to follow these guidelines in assessing students' performance. But, you know these are inadequate.

In this study, a small proportion of teachers reported to have received some institutional training on assessment; however, they shared that the quality of the training was not up to the mark. These comments reflect the inadequacy of training opportunities for teachers. Therefore, educational institutions need to arrange more quality training on assessment for the teachers.

The focus of the training was reported to be on the theory and principles of testing by nearly half (47%) of the respondents, on designing test formats by 11%,

on test construction by 7%, assessing examination scripts by 9% and on test data interpretation by 5%. A third (30%) of them reported receiving training with more than one of the above-mentioned foci. One FGD respondent commented, *'in my 12 years of teaching experience, I attended only once a three-hour-long session on how to assess scripts. I wish I learned how to interpret scores'*. Another stated:

I once attended a day-long seminar by the Bangladesh English Language Teachers Association. It highlighted the cornerstones of assessment but I feel that a week-long hands-on session would have been beneficial.

Data showed that the training teachers were provided with focused basically on theoretical principles of assessment rather than the practical aspects of situating assessment in the classroom context. Data also revealed that there was no training on how to score and provide feedback based on assessment results, as well as on how to use assessment to improve learning and teaching. One teacher stated, *'I remember some principles of testing and some testing-related terms but have not learned the practical use of assessment.'*

Interestingly, two dimensions of assessment are completely overlooked in the Bangladeshi assessment scenario. There is no training on assessing students' affect (e.g. attitude, interest and values) which has been emphasized by Popham (2009). Secondly, there is very little emphasis on how to assess students with special needs or disabilities.

Training on Test Administration

A large majority (82%) of the respondents reported having received no training on test administration, whereas only 18% received training. FGD participants expressed mixed opinions about the importance of training on test administration. One participant commented: *'We don't need training on test administration for day-to-day testing and assessment activities. We need it more for standardized and high stakes tests.'* However, others felt a dire need for training on test administration, as one observed:

We need training for giving any test successfully. Many teachers are lax in invigilation, they don't maintain time properly and often come to the exam centre late. They remain seated and gossip while students try to cheat.

Another teacher made a similar comment:

Some teachers do not take invigilation to be a serious responsibility. They often come to the exam halls with a bundle of scripts and grade them. Some remain busy reading books. This is not fair for the students.

Thus the data suggest that training on test administration is another neglected area. Teachers usually do not receive any training on how to administer tests. The major focus of training is on developing teachers' theoretical knowledge about testing with a minor focus on practical aspects such as marking scripts or interpretation of results.

Test Construction

The majority (58%) of the respondents reported setting questions based on both instructional content and syllabus whereas 14 and 12% set questions based on instructional content and syllabus, respectively. Again, 16% reported setting different kinds of questions including traditional and common questions (which are familiar and often repeated) as well as uncommon questions (which do not follow a traditional pattern, e.g. critical questions). FGDs revealed similar practices by teachers. One teacher commented: *'We often set traditional and easy questions so that students can answer easily.'* Another said, *'We set multiple choice questions for our admission test but have no training on how to design these questions appropriately.'*

It was reported that 40% of the respondents when they set questions, discussed with their colleagues or co-teachers and consulted previous question papers as well as the syllabus, whereas 34.5% of them followed either of the strategies. 5 teachers reported consulting previous question papers as well as the syllabus and four reported discussing questions with their colleagues as well as consulting the syllabus. FGD findings also support the survey findings as most of the teachers (9) stated that they checked the syllabus and old question papers for question setting purposes. One participant observed: *'The junior teachers usually consult the previous questions and their senior colleagues before setting questions.'* One senior colleague stated: *'I always consult the syllabus for setting questions. I consulted question papers from the previous five years.'*

The study found that over half (58%) of the respondents reported preparing test specifications before setting questions, whereas 42% did not. A considerable number of FGD participants admitted that they did not write test specifications and a few said they did. However, nearly all emphasized the importance of preparing test specifications, as one teacher stated: *'Test specifications help us to be more organized and help in making things clear for students. We can also avoid including questions on topics not covered in the class.'* Another teacher remarked: *'We have read about "test specifications" in our books on testing but have never learned to write test specifications. This is not our common practice when we set question papers.'*

The survey participants reported that they used the following assessment formats or techniques in addition to tests: assignments, presentations, interviews, oral discussion, reports, worksheets, project work, debate, writing reflections on the classroom blog, asking questions, observations, tutorials, peer feedback or peer assessment, self-correction, group work, portfolio assessment and class performance. Additionally, in the FGDs respondents also reported using a rich variety of assessment formats. It is encouraging to note that teachers used an array of alternative assessment types, which serves to increase the learning potential of assessment tools. Also, familiarity with a variety of assessment tools is vital for any context as it enables teachers to choose appropriate and effective instruments that match the learning objectives (Siegel & Wissehr, 2011). A study by Monib, Karimi, and Nijat (2020) reported positive attitudes and effects of utilizing the alternative assessment methods as it provided more opportunities for both teachers and students.

Marking Examination Scripts

A third (30%) of the respondents reported marking exam scripts based on criteria, whereas a fourth (25%) reported scoring based on overall impression. Again, 15% based their scoring on the rubric, 9% on the accuracy and 21% on more than one of these strategies. FGDs revealed that teachers generally avoided using rubrics while scoring scripts. They mentioned that they did not have a standardized rubric in place. Rubrics are a user-friendly form of the assessment tool and mediate improved performance for instance by increasing transparency (Brookhart & Chen, 2015). Hence, there needs to be more emphasis on using rubrics and specifying marking criteria at the tertiary level. Two-thirds (66%) of the respondents reported preparing answer keys while setting questions, whereas 34% reported not doing so. Some FGD participants also reported preparing answer keys and they found it time-saving. Teachers who reported preparing no answer keys commented that since they marked essay-type questions, they did not feel the need to prepare detailed answer keys and instead they used rubrics.

Two-thirds (63%) of the respondents reported the use of peer assessment by students, whereas 37% reported not using it. However, opinions about using peer assessment widely varied: some of the respondents reported that students did not feel confident about peer assessment, did not like it and preferred direct feedback from their teachers; conversely, others reported that it was time-saving, students enjoyed it and felt that they can also play the role of a teacher. A good number of FGD teachers mentioned that while using peer assessment students gave lower marks than their peers deserved. However, the opposite was also noticed by teachers when students gave their peers higher marks than deserved because they did not understand an error or where their answers went wrong. One teacher reported a concerned student's comment regarding peer assessment:

I am not happy when the teachers ask me to evaluate my classmates' scripts. What do they know about my abilities? They are at the same level as me and cannot see my problems. I think the teacher should do the assessment, otherwise, I will not learn.

Students in Bangladesh are generally used to teacher-centred teaching. In such a context it is natural that students will be intimidated by peer assessment solely because they expect and are accustomed to receiving any assessment-related information from the teacher. Strategy-focused feedback from teachers which includes notes on students' strengths, weaknesses and guidance for improvement is helpful. Teachers need to be patient as it may take time to develop this approach and build confidence among students. Moreover, peer assessment is believed to develop learner autonomy and critical thinking skills as students are encouraged to become more careful of their own writing strategies and revision practices (Patcham & Schunn, 2015).

With regard to self-assessment, over half (58%) of the respondents reported having never used self-assessment protocols with students in their classes, whereas 42% reported using it. However, the use of self-assessment tasks by students showed contrasting results: some teachers found that only a few students mentioned some

problems which they tried to solve, while some others observed that their experience was not satisfactory as they failed to motivate students. Some FGD respondents reported the use of self-assessment to be ineffective, as one noted, '*some students took it positively and others found self-assessment unsatisfactory as they felt they were incompetent.*' Teachers perhaps need to motivate students in evaluating themselves as Yan and Brown (2017) contend that 'from a pedagogical perspective the benefits of self-assessment, may come from active engagement in the learning process' (p. 1248).

Regarding teachers' confidence and preparedness about assessment tasks, over half (55%) of the participants reported that they felt somewhat confident about assessment-related activities, whereas nearly half (45%) of them reported feeling fully confident. Again, a good number of FGD participants were found quite confident about assessing students' performance, Over half (52%) of the respondents felt very much prepared about assessing students' performance, whereas 48% felt somewhat prepared. FGDs also yielded similar findings. It may be noted that in the FGDs a considerable number of teachers, mostly with ELT/TESOL degrees, mentioned that they felt confident and prepared to deal with assessment-related activities, e.g. setting and marking. One teacher with an ELT/TESOL background commented:

I face fewer problems in assessing student scripts. I prepare answer keys and rubrics before I start marking scripts. I also consult books and other materials beforehand while checking scripts that require holistic scoring. It is easy for me to mark their work as I am aware of marking approaches.

This shows that ELT/TESOL orientation may have had an impact on the assessment-related performance of teachers. Regarding complaints from students about issues of question setting and marking, the majority (73%) of the respondents claimed to have received no such complaints about the fairness of their question setting and marking practices, whereas 27% reported receiving such complaints. One teacher in the FGD articulated how he responded to some student complaints: '*I rechecked the scripts, I convinced them why my marking was right and they were wrong. I even tried to explain the rationale behind the markings.*' Another teacher however noted that '*students do not often feel encouraged to complain about the marks they are given... teachers do not take complaints easily, positively.*' These findings point to the need for developing teachers' assessment literacy regarding test construction, marking procedures and the importance of accountability and transparency.

Data from the FGDs also brought to the fore the contextual constraints faced by teachers in implementing sound assessment practices. A couple of FGD participants reported that they have knowledge of assessment concepts but are not able to apply them. For example, one teacher stated: '*I would love to give detailed feedback on students' scripts but limited time and large numbers of scripts do not permit me to do so*'. Another teacher commented:

In my university, we are required to administer a sit-down final exam for all courses. I thought that this one size fits all policy did not allow me to design a proper test for the academic writing course that I was teaching.

It is therefore important to keep the contextual constraints in mind while designing assessment tasks.

A number of significant issues have emerged from the findings of the study discussed above. These issues are connected to assessment, namely understanding about the concept and training aspect of assessment, test construction and administration procedures and marking examination scripts. To begin with, teachers' understanding of assessment was diverse but mainly measurement-focused. Secondly, results indicate gaps in teachers' assessment-related training needs as training opportunities were scarce and inadequate! Thirdly, training on test administration which is another integral component of the assessment cycle was reported to be minimal. Fourthly, adherence to test construction protocol also seemed to be missing. For example, teachers seemed to be unaware of the importance of drawing test specifications which are deemed to be an indispensable stage of test construction. Fifthly, although teachers reported using a number of test formats and alternative assessment techniques, two major useful and critical assessment tools—self-assessment and peer assessment were not in practice. Sixthly, regarding the marking of examination scripts it was revealed that teachers did not follow a uniform or standardized rubric or criteria for marking. Finally, another area of concern voiced was the awareness about contextual constraints mainly large classes and lack of implementation of assessment policies which hold teachers back from providing appropriate feedback to learners and engaging in fair test design and test administration.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This chapter provided an overall picture of the assessment literacy knowledge and practices of Bangladeshi tertiary-level teachers. The study found that teachers have a narrow and surface-level understanding of assessment-related concepts and practices. They possess basic assessment knowledge but lack the principled know-how of the application of this knowledge. The findings of this study highlight the inadequacy of the training sessions as they were one-off and of short duration and focused mainly on theoretical principles of assessment. Institutional training which is an integral part of teachers' ongoing professional development seemed to be largely missing. Since there is an emphasis to view assessment as only a measurement of student progress, teacher training programmes could perhaps emphasize more on the concept of 'assessment for learning rather than 'assessment of learning.'

Test construction procedures also did not seem to be in a satisfactory condition as teachers reported they were not familiar with the practice of writing test specifications and designed questions based on the syllabus and previous years' question papers. Respondent views revealed that only a small number of teachers consulted colleagues and used rubrics for scoring. Test administration and proctoring guidelines appeared not to be well laid out. In addition, peer and self-assessment were found to be infrequent and teachers seemed to be less aware of engaging students in these alternative assessment types.

In general, although the teachers engaged in a series of assessment-related tasks, they seemed to be only partially confident. However, all participants perceived the assessment literacy of teachers to be of paramount importance. They agreed that lack of appropriate knowledge and training on assessment might lead to poor assessment practices, which can seriously affect pedagogical decisions and the overall backwash effect or impact can be harmful. Although some facets of assessment practices, e.g. setting questions seem positive, the overall findings of the study do not project a very bright picture of the assessment landscape at the higher education institutions in Bangladesh.

This study is important as it is probably the first study to explore the assessment literacy level of university teachers in Bangladesh. However, one limitation of this study lies in the small sample size which might limit the generalizability of the findings. Future research should involve a larger sample of teachers as well as include other relevant stakeholder perspectives on this issue.

In the light of the findings of the study, the following recommendations are forwarded for developing the assessment literacy of tertiary-level teachers in Bangladesh.

1. *Compulsory training for enhancing assessment literacy*: Finding ways and means to develop the assessment literacy of teachers should be given the topmost priority. It is important to plan and design a comprehensive training programme for teachers to build their assessment literacy knowledge base and skills. Institutions need to focus on sustainable training at regular intervals to augment teachers' assessment capability. Besides, building teacher skills on peer assessment and self-assessment teachers need to be provided with hands-on training on test construction procedures. A mentoring system pairing an experienced teacher with a novice teacher may be useful.
2. *Ongoing research on assessment literacy*: Teachers can engage in ongoing research for identifying specific assessment-related problems of their respective institutions. Seminars on assessment could be regularly held where teachers can share their findings. Extensive and further research needs to be conducted in this area.
3. *Institutional support*: Teachers need to be provided with institutional support as contextual constraints can hinder sound assessment practices. If teachers' workload is reduced they can devote more time to quality assessment.

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Chapter 23

Impact of a National English as a Foreign Language Test on Parents in Nepal



Saraswati Dawadi

Abstract Despite a growing body of research on language test impact, little is known about the impacts of a test on parents. Drawing on critical language testing theory, this chapter reports on a study that explored the impact of a high-stakes secondary school national English as a foreign language (EFL) test on parents in Nepal. The data generated through semi-structured interviews with parents ($n = 6$) and students ($n = 6$), a student survey, and oral diaries ($n = 72$) revealed that the English test had severe impact on parents. The findings indicated that social (e.g. status quo and family pressure), economic (e.g. buying preparation materials and private tuition), and psychological factors (e.g. stress and anxiety) associated with the test affected parents in complex ways. This impact, however, varied among the parents in the study which seemed to have been influenced by their educational background and their own past experiences. The final section of the chapter presents some pressing policy, research, and pedagogical implications of the study.

Keywords High-stakes tests · English as a foreign language · Test impact · Test anxiety · Test pressure

Introduction

Parents are primary stakeholders of a school test because parents have a natural tendency to help their children with test preparation. Since they play a vital role in their children's education, they are vulnerable to the impacts of high-stakes test results (Abu-Alhija, 2007). However, they have been under-researched compared to other stakeholders, such as teachers and students. In fact, Rogers, Barblett, and Robinson (2016) rightly argue, "The stakeholders who have received the least attention are parents" (p. 329). Therefore, this study aimed at addressing this gap by exploring the impact of a high-stakes English as a foreign language (EFL) test on parents in Nepal.

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This paper explored the impact of the Secondary Education Examination (SEE), previously known as School Leaving Certificate (SLC), English test on parents in Nepal, a small developing country in South Asia. The SEE, a national standardized test, is conducted at the end of 10-year school education for children aged 15–16 years old. The SEE English test is divided into two parts (reading and writing test that covers 75% and listening and speaking test 25%). While the writing test is externally controlled by the National Examination Board (NEB), a constituent organization of the Ministry of Education, Nepal, the speaking test is conducted by schools.

The SEE is a high-stakes test in the Nepalese context as it functions as a gateway to higher secondary education (Dawadi, 2018, 2020). However, there is hardly any research on the impacts of the SEE English test on parents. Therefore, the main rationale for conducting this study starts with the need to explore the nature of the impact of the test on parents in Nepal.

This paper aims to contribute to the testing literature by reflecting on the nature of a high-stakes test's impact on parents through the lens of critical language testing (CLT, explained below). A second potential contribution concerns the research methodology used in this study that can be possibly employed by future researchers. In terms of application, the research reported here can contribute to better informing schools and teachers about the nature of test impact on parents.

Empirical Background to the Study

Parents are a crucial part of language testing practices. Parents, irrespective of their economic status, ethnic background, and educational level, want their children to perform well on high-stakes tests as tests are likely to bring life-changing consequences to their children's lives. Most parents take financial and caring responsibility for their children and provide all kinds of support to their children in order to better prepare their children for such tests. Therefore, parents are affected by such tests. However, little research has explored this area (Rogers et al., 2016).

Before discussing the nature of test impact on parents, it is fundamental to reflect on the extent to which parents have knowledge about high-stakes tests. As parents have a vital part to play in high-stakes test preparation practices, it might be helpful for them if they can learn what the tests include and what kind of consequences the tests can bring to their children's lives. In other words, parents should be well informed about what their children's tests mean and the level of performance of their children on those tests including possible consequences of the tests to their children's lives. If parents do not know about the nature of the tests and their possible consequences to their children, this may deter them from being supportive of high-stakes testing. However, too often parents do not seem to be well informed about their children's tests (Dawadi, 2019a). Furthermore, it is highly unlikely that many parents, particularly parents with low education, will understand the nature, the construct and the psychological impact of testing on their children. In most contexts, test

results are not explained adequately to help parents better understand their children's learning achievement. For instance, Desforges, Hughes, and Holden's (1994) study suggests that the majority of parents (i.e. 63%) in the UK have little or no knowledge of what is involved in SATs. Scott (2007) further reports that most parents in the UK have little understanding of what statutory testing usually entails and what the test information they receive actually means. Similarly, in the context of the USA, Mulvenon, Stegman, and Ritter (2005) argue that the majority of the states in the USA do not have formal policies for communicating test results to parents. So, most parents receive only some or no explanation of the test results by schools or teachers.

The literature on language testing also indicates that there are psychological impacts of high-stakes tests on parents. For instance, the parents of students, identified as at-risk of failure, expressed elevated stress in Westfall's (2010) study. Similarly, Wyn, Turnbull, and Grimshaw's (2014) study suggests that parents in Australia experience stress due to their concerns about their children's performances on National Assessment Program– Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN). Rogers et al. (2016) further argue that NAPLAN has some negative impacts on the well-being of parents and students.

However, another US study by Mulvenon et al. (2005) suggested that the majority of parents do not feel stress or anxiety associated with the SAT-9 tests. They also do not feel any pressure to prepare their children for the tests. These findings are consistent with Osburn, Stegman, Suitt, and Ritter's (2004) claim that most parents (73%) have a moderate level of anxiety and stress associated with the SAT-9 test and they did not feel pressure to help their children perform well on the test. However, some parents, particularly the parents of students who do poorly on the exams, feel pressure to help their children.

Several authors have focused on private tutoring practices for learning and test preparation in Asia and their impact on parents, particularly in East and central Asian context (e.g. Bray & Lykins, 2012; William, 2018; Yahiaoui, 2020). They discuss parents' anxiety associated with their children's performances on high-stakes tests and point out "their fear to be labeled as failed parents" (William, 2018, p.114). There are even some cases, as highlighted by Yahiaoui (2020) that if parents find out that other parents have sent their children to tuition classes, they get worried and do the same as they may feel responsible for their children's failure if they do not pay for private tuition classes. Indeed, "parents are caught between the hammer and the anvil and have to pay to secure a better career [for] their children" (Yahiaoui, 2020, p. 94).

However, very little is known about the impacts of high-stakes tests on parents in low-resourced countries like Nepal. Therefore, this study explored the extent to which the parents in Nepal have knowledge about the SEE English test and the perceived impacts of the test on parents.

Theoretical Framework for the Study

Language assessment is a social activity which is connected to a whole set of variables that interact in society (Dawadi, 2019a). Hence, the true nature of assessment can be understood only by taking account of the social contexts in which it operates (Shohamy, 2001). It is likely to bring consequences to its stakeholders including parents. Foucault (1979) considers assessment to be a source of power and a disciplinary tool that can set norms to classify, qualify, and punish individuals and hold them under surveillance.

Since language tests can bring life-changing consequences to students, they have a deep influence on students' and parents' emotions and feelings (Xiao & Carless, 2013). The tests create pressure and anxiety in students and parents. However, language testing literature indicates that test impact researchers, quite for a long time, addressed only the measurement issues while overlooking the impacts of such tests on an individual's life (Dawadi, 2019a). Critical language testing (CLT) theory examines the roles of tests in society, considering tests in relation to their power and consequences in educational and social contexts (Shohamy, 2001). Shohamy views that tests should be seen as powerful tools that are directly related to levels of learner success and they are deeply embedded in cultural, social, and educational arenas. Her framework of CLT suggests that language testing is not neutral, but is shaped by social, cultural, educational, political, and ideological agendas (for a detailed discussion of CLT, please see Lynch, 2001). CLT points out that language testers need to be fully aware of the power of a test and its consequences to its stakeholders and they need to ensure that tests bring the intended impacts on stakeholders (Dawadi, 2019a). It is equally important to respect the rights of each stakeholder including parents. Thus, as argued by Shohamy (1993), language testers' role does not end in the development phase of language tests; rather they have to examine the consequences of those tests to the people involved.

In order to address the research question of the study (i.e. what are the impacts of the SEE English test on parents), I employed CLT as it enabled me to critically evaluate the nature of the test's impact on parents in Nepal. However, it is worth pointing out that the findings reported in this paper are from a large research study that explored various aspects of the SEE English test impacts in the Nepalese context (See Dawadi, 2019a for details).

The Study

Participants

The participants in this study included EFL students ($N = 247$, aged 15–16 years) and their parents ($N = 6$) from rural Nepal. Out of the six parents, three were with high education (at least SLC/SEE graduates) but the rest of the parents were not able

to read and write. Their age ranged between 35 to 62 years and they represented different professions: farmer ($N = 2$), teacher ($N = 2$), stonebreaker ($N = 1$), and shopkeeper ($N = 1$). During the time of data collection, the students were preparing for the SEE, a high-stakes test in Nepal.

Data Collection

This study employed a mixed-method design comprising a questionnaire survey and six case studies. It is worth pointing out that considering the low literacy rate of parents in Nepal, the questionnaire survey was limited to students. However, the student survey asked the students for information about what test impact they perceived to have been on their parents in addition to themselves. This paper does not report on the test impact on students.

The six case study students were asked to audio-record oral diaries once a week intermittently for three months (first month during the usual classes, second during the test preparation time, i.e. around six weeks before the test, and the final one during the test results publication). Each of them along with their parents (one parent for each) was interviewed twice: in the pre-test (around six weeks before the test) and post-test contexts (around two months after the test results publication).

Research Ethics

The British Educational Research Association (BERA) ethical guidelines (2011) were followed to maintain the ethics in this study. Both children and their parents were given a full account of the project and we requested permission from children's parents for them to take part in the project. Children themselves were also directly asked whether they wanted to take part in this study. Both parents and students were informed that participation was voluntary and that all data would be treated as confidential and anonymized promptly.

Data Analysis

The study employed a thematic analysis approach to systematically analyze the data. All the interviews and oral diaries were transcribed and transferred to NVivo 10 for the analysis; students' qualitative comments in the survey were also transferred to NVivo 10. The data was looked at through the lens of CLT. As thematic analysis is a constant-comparative method, data analysis in this study involved reading and rereading the transcripts in a systematic way. To maintain necessary rigor in the analysis process, this study adopted the six-phase process as proposed by Braun and

Clarke (2006): Familiarization with the data, Generating Initial Codes, Searching for Themes, Reviewing Themes, Defining and Naming Themes, and Writing Report. Nevertheless, those analytic procedures were not a linear series of steps but rather an iterative process.

Findings and Discussion

The key findings in this study indicated that the SEE English test had a huge impact on parents. There were three different factors associated with the test impacts on parents: psychological, social, and economic. Each of them is briefly presented below.

Psychological Impacts of the Test on Parents

The test had severe psychological impacts on parents. All the parents (except P6) in this study reported that they had a heightened level of anxiety associated with the test as indicated by the quotes below:

I never got a chance to go to school and I have a painful life. Therefore, I want to see my daughter well educated and working in a good office. For this, she first has to do well in the SEE. Sometimes I feel like if in case she cannot do well in the examination, her future will be dark. This makes me really worried. (P5)

I think my parents are also very much worried about the test. (S 201)

Parents also felt elevated pressure to raise test scores: *“I feel pressure because of the test. If he cannot do well on the test, his future will be affected. So, I feel like I should support him in whatever way I can”* (P3). Moreover, the test increased parents’ workload and affected even their daily routines:

I have to get up early in the morning to wake her up and make her ready to go to tuition classes by 5.30 am. In the evening as well, I sit in her room till 11.00 pm to make sure that she is studying there. (P1)

The findings also indicated that parents were worried as they considered the SEE to be very important for their children’s career. For example, P3 mentioned:

The test is very important for his career. If he cannot do well, there will be different problems. One of the immediate problems will be associated with his higher education. For instance, as I told you earlier, he seems interested in studying science at his higher secondary level but, if he cannot get a good grade on this test, he will not be eligible to study science.

Nevertheless, individual differences could be observed in this study as two of the parents (P4, P6) did not feel any pressure because of the test: *“I do not have any kind of pressure. I know that my child is one of the best students in his class and he has been doing really well on his class tests.”* (P6).

These findings to some extent support the findings of previous test impact studies. For instance, Wyn et al. (2014) also reported that parents in Australia had elevated stress due to their concerns about their children's performances in high-stakes tests. However, Osburn et al.'s (2004) claim that the parents of the children, who were the low performers on the SAT-9, had more pressure to raise test scores than the parents whose children were high performers.

The main reason behind parents' anxiety seemed to be their perceived importance of the test on students' future career. Most parents in Nepal think that the SEE is everything for their children's career. Indeed, failure in the SEE is seen as a failure in life, and success is equated with an individual's value to the Nepalese society (Dawadi, 2019a). In other words, success in the SEE "raises their social status and the society values the individuals as its responsible member" (Bhattra, 2014, p.59). Thus, the SEE is considered to be a landmark in an individual's life as it is believed that the examination provides the ladder for one to get higher education and also opens up the vista of developing his/her career (Giri, 2011). Almost all parents think that their children's future will be ruined if they cannot perform well in the SEE (Dawadi, 2021). Consequently, they feel anxious about their children's performance on the test. In this study, as all the students were studying in public schools in a remote part of Nepal, the majority of students had low proficiency in English. Thus, parents' anxiety might have resulted from students' low proficiency in English.

Nevertheless, individual differences could be observed in this study as two of the parents (P4, P6) did not feel any pressure because of the test. More interestingly, in a comparison between the parents of high achievers, parents with high education were found more worried about the test results than the parents with low education. One of the reasons behind this appeared to be that parents with high education had more concerns about the future consequences of the test to their children such as higher secondary school/college selection and scholarship applications. However, illiterate parents did not know much about the importance of the test in the career prospects of their children.

Social Impacts of the Test on Parents

The study indicated that the performance on the test was associated with their social prestige or their status quo. All the parents had a belief that poor performance on the test would negatively affect their prestige in their society: "*I am worried that if he cannot do well in the examination, it will be a great shame for me in my society as all the people know his results*" (P3); "*My parents will be respected more in our society if I can perform well on the test*" (S6); "*My parents tell me that it will be shameful for us in the society if I cannot perform well on the test*" (S212).

The findings provide evidence to Budhathoki et al.'s (2014) claim that Nepalese parents perceive the test as a marker of their social prestige. Therefore, they provided every possible form of support to their children for the preparation of the test. They even collaborated with their neighbors and relatives to be able to support their children

for the test preparation: “*We have requested our neighbor, who is also an English teacher, to support our daughter for the preparation of the test*” (P-1); “*I visited my auntie’s home to learn English and she helped me to answer some grammar-related questions from the question collection book*” (S5).

Since the SEE scores have been increasingly ... used by the Nepalese government as the sole criterion to judge the quality of school education, the public schools in Nepal are rewarded or penalized based on students’ performances in the SEE (Dawadi, 2019a), the public schools pressurize parents to raise the test scores. However, schools should understand that this kind of pressure creates anxiety and an economic burden on parents.

Economic Impacts of the Test on Parents

The study also observed the economic impacts of the test on parents. It was found that parents spent a significant amount of money to buy books and other materials as they tried their best to provide their children with all the materials or resources needed for their test preparation: “*I have bought whatever book he needs for the test preparation*” (P3); “*My parents bought all the necessary things needed for the test preparation*” (S18).

The survey indicated that almost all the students (95%) took coaching classes run by their school teachers and 9% of the students took some private tuition classes as well. The test put pressure on parents in such a way that most of them sent their children to tuition classes throughout the academic year.

The findings further indicated that parents had the feelings of being co-responsible for the test preparation. They reported that test preparation is a matter for students, parents, and teachers as suggested by the excerpt: “*We should not depend only on teachers. I think, we have an equal responsibility to prepare our children for the test*” (P1).

This kind of feeling might have also encouraged them to send children to private tuition classes. Nevertheless, these kinds of practices created economic burdens on parents in such a way that they had to cut off their daily bread to manage money for their children’s education: It was really heart-touching to hear the struggle of parents to manage money for their children’s extra tuition classes: “*It has been very difficult for me to manage all the cost for her education but I am ready even to have insufficient food*” (P2).

To reiterate, the SEE seems to create a huge economic burden on parents as they were compelled to pay extra money for private tuition classes and/or school accommodation.

Examining Findings from CLT Perspectives

Looking at the findings through the lens of the first critical perspective of CLT—“an interest in particular domains such as gender, class, ethnicity, and the ways that language and language-related issues (like all human relations and activities) are interconnected with them” (Lynch, 2001, p. 263)—it is indicated that the SEE is a social process, and it has several consequences to parents, a part of the Nepalese society.

One of the main reasons behind parents’ anxiety associated with the English test seems to be their perceived importance of the English language and the SEE English test. As Bhattraï (2014) rightly points out, there has been a high demand for the English language in *Nepal*, as English has been associated with the social prestige and career progression of an individual. Similarly, the SEE has been used as a gate-keeping instrument for admission to higher education and for employment (Giri, 2011). This means that the SEE has been used as a powerful instrument to control access to higher education (Bhattraï, 2014). Therefore, Nepalese parents are worried that their children’s career progression will be affected by the English test results.

The SEE English test also serves the agendas of higher secondary schools or colleges in Nepal. Many schools/colleges use the SEE English test as an appropriate and sufficient measure of students’ English proficiency when they enroll students at Grade 11. Because of the enduring and extended use of the SEE results in the higher education context in Nepal, most parents want their children to perform well on the test and they feel pressure to raise the test scores (Bhattraï, 2014; Budhakoti et al., 2014; Giri, 2011).

The second critical perspective of CLT—“the notion that our research needs to consider paradigms beyond the dominant, postpositivist-influenced one” (Lynch, 2001, p. 263)—is addressed through the mixed-methods approach in the current study. Both the qualitative (oral diary entries and semi-structured interviews) and quantitative data (survey) were collected to create a comprehensive picture of the impact of the SEE test in the Nepalese context. Moreover, as the study sits within the interpretive paradigm, it allows for “different meanings and interpretations rather than a single absolute truth” aimed for in the dominant psychometric traditions” (Lynch, 2001, p. 363). By employing a mixture of methods and bringing both students’ and parents’ views together, the current study is better able to reflect on the nature of the test impact.

The third critical perspective of CLT—“a concern for changing the human and social world, not just describing it: the ‘transformative agenda’, with the related and motivational concern for social justice and equality” (Lynch, 2001, p. 263)—relates to our concern for hearing the voices of parents, one of the primary stakeholders of the SEE in Nepal. This study created an opportunity for parents (and students) to exercise their democratic right to be heard by the public.

CLT acknowledges that the knowledge of any tester is incomplete and limited. Therefore, there is a need for testers to rely on additional knowledge sources to obtain a more accurate and valid description and interpretation of knowledge; they

have to construct their knowledge by working together with other stakeholders of tests including parents (Dawadi, 2019a). However, as the findings discussed above indicate, the test designers hardly listen to parents' voices in the test development process in Nepal. Consequently, the test seems to have hugely negative impacts on parents. Regrettably, parents do not even seem to know that they have the right to raise their voices about the testing practices. They accept the authority of the SEE without any question.

The final critical perspective of CLT—"the requirement that critical applied linguistics be self-reflexive" (Lynch, 2001, p. 363)—concerns our own role, as a responsible member of the Nepalese society and a testing researcher, to make a critical observation of the assessment practices in Nepal. The current reality is that the Nepalese government spends very little money on educational research and almost no money on test impact research. Very similar to the Cambodian context (Moore, Stroupe, & Mahony, 2012), almost all Nepalese academics are paid for their teaching hours but they receive almost nothing for their research. Consequently, educational research is still in its infancy in Nepal (Bhattraï, 2014), and the studies that have explored test impact issues in the Nepalese context are scarce.

The argument that "academics cherish the right of 'academic freedom' to research what they like and to report their findings, whether favorable or unfavorable to their sponsors" (Moore et al., 2012, p. 61) or to the concerned authorities is fully applicable in my case. I conducted this study according to my own perception of what an impact study should comprise, have made a critical observation of the test impact issues, and then reported the findings without any fear.

Implications of the Study

The findings indicate that the test has social, economic, and psychological impacts on parents. The test has created feelings of sadness and disappointment in such a way that some parents end up with sleepless nights. Therefore, there is an urgent need for stress management sessions and workshops for parents. For this, teachers need to be trained first (Dawadi, 2019a).

Although parents were actively involved in the test preparation and considered the test preparation as a co-responsibility of parents, students, and teachers, they have little knowledge about the test and its processes. Parental engagement in test preparation can be more effective when parents have clear, specific, and targeted information from schools (Dawadi, 2019b; Goodall & Vorhaus, 2011). As argued by Cheng, Andrews, and Yu (2010), if parents know about the nature of children's tests, it is likely that they can better support their children.

Parents can play a vital role in assessment innovation if they are well informed about the test and get a chance to be involved in the test development process. However, the findings indicated that parents neither receive information about the test nor are offered a chance to be involved in test development. Although it is not practical to involve all parents in the test development process, at least a sample

of parents should be consulted during the test development process and their views should be collected through questionnaires and interviews.

To lower schools' pressure on parents related to the test, the SEE scores should not be used as the sole criterion to judge the quality of schools, and the test results should not be given so much importance, rather students' skills to use the language communicatively should be highlighted. It is better to follow the French practice, as Black and William (2005, p. 253) argue, students' scores on external high-stakes tests are not used as a way of monitoring schools' standard or quality, rather all aspects of educational provisions including classroom practices, resources, and facilities for students, and teachers are monitored by the MOE through focused surveys.

The study indicates that parents consider that their children's poor performances on the test diminish their social prestige. This is the result of the current practice that schools and the NEB publicize the test scores without paying due attention to the confidentiality of each individual student. It is unfortunate to see that some schools even display individual students' scores along with their pictures in public places to attract potential students, a common phenomenon among private schools as seen in big cities. This practice creates more pressure and anxiety in students and parents. Therefore, careful measures, such as maintaining confidentiality in the publication of the results, need to be taken by schools and NEB.

Limitations of the Study

The study reveals interesting findings with regard to the impacts of a high-stakes test on parents. However, the study has two major limitations. The first limitation of the study concerns its sample size. As this study was limited to 247 students and six parents in Nepal, generalization of the findings is limited by this constraint. The second limitation of the study concerns the type of parents included in this study. All the parents in this study were from public schools in a remote part of Nepal. Therefore, this study cannot capture the voices of private school parents.

Recommendations for Future Research

Though this study was mainly interested in how parents in an EFL context provide support to their children for the preparation of a high-stakes test, it would have been definitely helpful to know about the pedagogical practices and how schools collaborate with parents, particularly about their policy to inform parents about assessment process (Dawadi, 2019b). Had the data from schools been obtained, it might have helped to clarify several ambiguities emerging from this data that would lead to a more comprehensive picture of the SEE test impact. Thus, this highlights that methodological triangulation in test impact research like this is crucial. Thus, it is

hoped that future research includes methodological triangulation to create a more comprehensive picture of the test impact.

More evidence is required on how parents from different geographical locations or from different professions (such as doctors, engineers, lawyers, etc.) and classes are affected by the high-stakes nature of the test. Thus, it is recommended that future research includes more parents from different social strata. Additionally, this study was limited to the parents, who sent their children to public schools which use Nepali as a medium of instruction. It can be assumed that the parents, whose children study in English medium schools, might be less affected by the test as their children might have better proficiency in English and more confidence in doing well on the test. Thus, more research is needed to explore the views of the parents who send their children to private schools (i.e. English medium schools).

Conclusion

This study explored the nature of the impacts of the SEE English test on parents through the lens of CLT. The findings indicated that there are social, economic, and psychological impacts of the test on parents but many of them had little knowledge about the test. The impact of the test seems to be associated with the Nepalese cultural practices, such as students' performances on a test is considered to be associated with their social prestige and test scores are considered to be more important than students' skills. Consequently, parents suffer a high level of pressure and anxiety, and they have an economic burden to send their children to private tuition classes and provide resources or materials needed for the test preparation. Therefore, there is an urgent need for stress management training for parents. Schools also need to introduce a formal policy to inform parents about assessment policies and practices as many of them had little knowledge of the test. It is equally important that NEB involves more parents in the test development process and listens to their voices.

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Chapter 24

Common Item Violations in Multiple Choice Questions in Bangladeshi Recruitment Tests



Md. Elias Uddin

Abstract The Multiple Choice Questions (MCQ) used in different assessment contexts in Bangladesh are often found to flout the fundamental principles of item writing. Item violations tend to creep into MCQs even after much care is taken in their construction. For this reason, to be able to construct flawless MCQs, item writers must have the knowledge of the accepted MCQ item writing guidelines as well as of the kind of violations that frequently occur. This chapter discusses common MCQ item violations with illustrative samples from the English sections of high-stakes Bangladeshi recruitment tests and explains how item violations affect the validity and reliability of tests. It also offers a checklist of the common item violations that require special attention during the construction and moderation of MCQs. The chapter concludes with the suggestion for the use of checklists of common MCQ item violations by item writers and moderators to avoid item violations.

Keywords MCQ item violation · Test validity · Reliability of test results · High-stakes recruitment tests · Bangladesh

Introduction

The MCQ is a widely used test technique for some practical reasons. For instance, it allows for rapid, reliable automatic scoring with minimal human intervention and a wider coverage of learning objectives and contents (Haladyna, Downing & Stevens, 2019; Hughes, 2003). Allegations that MCQs allow guessing (Biggs, 1999) encourage cheating (Hughes, 2003) and are unable to measure higher-order skills (Walsh & Seldomridge, 2006) are not fully tenable: guessing is equally possible with other test techniques; cheating is a purely administrative concern; the context-dependent MCQs with interpretive materials presented in a paragraph, table, chart and picture, for example, can measure the candidates' higher-level mental thinking to some extent. Again, the MCQ technique is, of course, rightly criticised on the grounds

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that it measures only recognition skills, not production skills (Hughes, 2003) and that answering MCQs is an unreal task (Weir, 1998). Notwithstanding its potential drawbacks, the very advantages it has over other test techniques somewhat suffice to account for its huge popularity in diverse assessment contexts throughout the world.

The educational contexts where MCQs are used side by side with other techniques include classroom assessment in the form of diagnostic tests/quizzes as well as progress achievement tests (e.g. mid-term examinations) and large-scale final achievement tests (e.g. semester/year final examinations) administered by education boards or different departments of educational institutions. Besides, the evaluation contexts of MCQ use comprise a number of high-stakes or large-scale tests: placement tests like university admission tests, proficiency tests like IELTS and TOEFL, other international standardised tests like GRE, GMAT and SAT and recruitment tests administered by different employer organisations in a diversity of contexts across the globe. The information about the test-takers' ability/performance gleaned through these assessment instruments inform important decisions that impact directly or indirectly on their learning, level of motivation, future study, scholarship and career opportunities, social status and financial condition, among others. Given the numerous ways in which these tests affect stakeholders including test-takers, test-providers, users of test results, guardians of test-takers, educational institutions and the wider society (Bachman & Palmer, 1996; Hughes, 2003; McNamara, 2000), it is imperative that the test providers employ well-trained and theoretically informed MCQ item writers as well as item moderators to ensure the quality of MCQs in their respective assessment contexts. Writing flawless MCQ items is a difficult and laborious task (Hughes, 2003) and there is research evidence (e.g. Pham, Besanko & Devitt, 2018; Tarrant, Knierim, Hayes & Ware, 2006; Uddin, 2018) that flawed MCQs are often found in test papers of low-stakes as well as high-stakes tests.

The MCQ item writers must have an adequate knowledge of the principles and practices of MCQ item writing to make sure that they write quality MCQ items. Additionally, they need to be aware of the flaws or item violations (IVs) that tend to occur frequently in MCQs. As Henning (2012) puts it, a sound testing procedure 'can be achieved through avoidance of errors' (p. 33). Awareness about the common MCQ IVs can surely help item writers to avoid the errors and thus design quality MCQs ready for use in concerned assessment contexts. Taking this into consideration, this chapter sheds light on the common IVs with illustrative sample MCQs. It specifically focuses on IVs that occur in MCQs used for assessing test-takers' English language ability only and samples have been taken from 13 high-stakes Bangladeshi recruitment tests for analysing violations to item writing principles. All MCQs considered for analysis in this chapter have four options. In addition, it explains how the IVs affect the test validity and the reliability of test results. It also presents the IVs in the form of a checklist (see Appendix I) to be used by item writers and moderators in Bangladesh and elsewhere while writing and scrutinising MCQs.

MCQ Development

MCQ Structure

An MCQ is usually presented in such a way that the test-taker is required to choose 'the answer from a number of given options, only one of which is correct' (Weir, 1998, p. 43). The components of an MCQ include a stem, a distractor and a key. The stem asks the question, sets the task the candidate must perform, or states the problem the candidate must solve (Brookhart & Nitko, 2015). The suggested responses are called 'options', 'choices', or 'alternatives', of which the correct or best one is called the 'key', 'keyed answer' or 'keyed alternative' and the incorrect ones are called 'distractors', 'misleads' or 'foils'. To ensure greater clarity or authenticity of an MCQ item, additional information can be presented in a paragraph, a table, a chart, a graph, etc. and this information is called interpretive materials (Bookhart & Nitko, 2015). MCQs containing such interpretive materials with the stem are called context-dependent items.

Challenges in MCQ Item Writing

The construction of quality MCQs, however, is not an easy task and it is generally very time-consuming, particularly more so when it involves assessing higher-order skills (Burton, Sudweeks, Merrill & Wood, 1991; Downing, 2006; Haladyna, 1999; Hughes, 2003; Weir, 1998). The task of writing plausible distractors demands significantly on the item writer's time, energy and expertise. However, the item writer might lack one or the other of these requisites. Consequently, MCQs used in different assessment contexts are often found to violate the principles of MCQ item writing. As Hughes (2003) claims, 'multiple choice tests that are produced for use within institutions are often shot through with faults' (p. 77). Further, poorly constructed MCQs often appear in high-stakes tests in assessment contexts where poor standards are maintained in item writing, moderation and trialling.

Defining an MCQ Item Violation

An MCQ item violation (IV) occurs when an item fails to conform to one or more of the accepted principles of item writing. Flawed items are usually confusing and even irritating for test-takers, are either more difficult or easier for them to handle and, after all, cause stakeholders to lose faith in the tests. MCQs containing IVs are, therefore, less discriminating, less valid and less reliable (Downing, 2005; Haladyna et al., 2002).

To construct flawless MCQs, the item writers need to meticulously follow the principles of MCQ item writing (for MCQ item writing guidelines, see Chap. 10 in Brookhart & Nitko, 2015; Burton et al., 1991; Frey, Petersen, Edwards, Pedrotti & Peyton, 2005; Haladyna et al., 2002). Brookhart and Nitko (2015) enumerate a set of item writing guidelines categorised into three groups in relation to the stem, the distractors and the correct alternative. Again, Frey et al. (2005) prepared a consensus list of 40 MCQ writing rules by analysing 20 classroom assessment textbooks. This list addresses four different validity concerns such as ‘potentially confusing wording or ambiguous requirements, the problem of guessing, test-taking efficiency and controlling for test wiseness’ (p. 357). Furthermore, the revised taxonomy of 31 MCQ item writing guidelines, validated by Haladyna et al. (2002) through a logical process of reviewing 27 textbooks on educational assessment and the findings of 27 research studies and reviews, offers a very comprehensive set of accepted MCQ item writing principles. They reorganised the guidelines of the original taxonomy proposed by Haladyna and Downing (1989) under five groups: content concerns, formatting concerns, style concerns, writing the stem and writing the choices, with six variations for Guideline 28, which is related to clues to the key. Thus, if the six variations under Guideline 28 are considered separately, the actual number of guidelines in the revised taxonomy stands to 36. To validate each guideline, the authors made their collective judgement based on two sources of evidence: collective opinions of textbook authors and empirical research. Haladyna et al.’s (2002) taxonomy is by far the most influential and widely used for its more rigorous validation process. Even Frey et al. (2005) used the reviews appearing in Haladyna and Downing (1989) and Haladyna et al. (2002) to indicate which of their guidelines received empirical research support. While constructing MCQ items, the item writers can either directly use the lists of item writing guidelines from these sources or prepare their own checklists based on these sources. Such checklists will also be equally useful for item moderators.

MCQ Use in Recruitment Tests in Bangladesh

In Bangladesh, many high-stakes recruitment tests administered by both public and private sector employers generally consist of three phases: preliminary, written and viva voce (see, for example, Bangladesh Public Service Commission, 2013). Candidates must obtain a set passing score in the preliminary examination to qualify for taking the written test. Those who pass the written test are allowed to appear at the viva voce. Based on their performance on the viva voce, the candidates are finally selected for recruitment. Of these three phases, the preliminary phase uses only MCQs for selecting the pool of candidates to be allowed to sit for the written test. These preliminary MCQ test papers are generally comprised of separate sections on Bangla language and literature, English language (and literature), general knowledge, mathematical reasoning and computer and information technology, among others. This

chapter considers illustrative samples only from the English language (and literature) section of these tests to explain MCQ item violations.

Literature Review

Research reveals that flawed MCQs are quite common in assessments in certain disciplines and may impact such parameters as candidates' performance, item difficulty and discrimination indices (e.g. Ahmed et al., 2021; Hijji, 2017; Pham et al., 2018; Tarrant & Ware, 2008). In terms of the frequency of flawed items, Hijji (2017) reported that 91.8% of 98 MCQs included in nursing examinations at three middle-eastern universities had one or more flaws including linguistic errors, various problems with the stem and answer options. Again, DiSantis et al., (2015) investigated seven flaws and identified them in 43% of 181 continuing Medical Education MCQs in three major radiology journals. The IVs they identified include 'Unfocused Stem', 'Negative Stem', 'Window Dressing', 'Unequal Option Length', 'Negative Options', 'Clues to the Correct Answer (Vague terms, Specific determiners, Mutually exclusive pair of options, Grammatical inconsistencies)' and 'Heterogeneous Options'. Another study by Tarrant et al. (2006) found that 46.2% of a total of 2770 MCQs used in tests held between 2001 and 2005 in one nursing department in Hong Kong contained item violations. They investigated 19 IVs in the MCQs that were purported to measure knowledge of clinical nursing courses (e.g. health assessment, nursing research, nursing theory and so on). Also, Downing (2005) reported 46% of a total of 219 MCQs used in medical school examinations to be flawed.

Concerning the effect of flawed MCQs, Tarrant and Ware (2008) reported that high-achieving students were more likely than low-achievers to be affected by flawed MCQ items in high-stakes nursing assessments. Also, there is empirical evidence regarding the impact of individual flaws. For example, Tamir (1993) showed that the negative forms in MCQs assessing higher-order cognitive skills led to increased item difficulty. Again, candidates who recognised two or more options as being correct were found to be cued to choose the 'all of the above' option, which led to candidates' obtaining elevated scores and reduced reliability and concurrent validity of their scores (Harasym, Leong, Violato, Brant & Lorscheider, 1998).

Little research has been done on IVs in MCQs used in assessing English language abilities. The only study by Uddin (2018) investigated IVs in MCQs assessing English abilities in the Bangladeshi context and reported that 46.6% of a total of 545 MCQs used in the English language ability sections of high-stakes recruitment tests in Bangladesh violated item writing principles.

Analysing Common MCQ Item Violations in Bangladeshi Recruitment Tests

In this section, 18 common MCQ IVs have been discussed with illustrative examples from the English section of high-stakes recruitment tests in Bangladesh (see Table 24.1). The five sub-types under Item Violation 14 have been counted as separate IVs (see Appendix I). The selection of the IVs for discussion in this chapter has been informed by a careful examination of the accepted item writing guidelines mentioned earlier as well as the following conceptual and empirical literature on MCQ IVs: Coombe, Folsie and Hubley, (2007), DiSantis et al. (2015), Downing (2005), Henning (2012), Tarrant et al. (2006) and Uddin (2018). The flawed MCQs were discussed with two other colleagues to reach a consensus on the category of IV identified. The occurrence of the IVs enlisted for discussion was reported in previous empirical studies. Although the order in which the IVs have been discussed in this chapter may largely conform to the order based on the frequency of occurrence in Uddin (2018), the ordering does not carry any significance as such and can be deemed to be arbitrary.

Of the 19 illustrative samples of MCQs used for analysis, 17 have been taken from original MCQ test papers and only two (Sample MCQs 11 and 12) have been taken from test banks. On original question papers, the names of the tests and/or their year of administration were sometimes not mentioned probably for test security reasons; sample questions 3 and 5 have been taken from such question papers. The sample questions have been taken from 13 different question papers of examinations held between 2015 and 2022 and the examinations are Bangladesh Civil Service Preliminary Test, Bank Recruitment (Executive Officer) Exam, Public Service Commission (PSC) Bank Recruitment (Cash Officer) Exam, PSC College/Equivalent Exam and PSC School/Equivalent Exam. All sample questions have been used anonymously.

Table 24.1 Common MCQ item violations in Bangladeshi recruitment tests

1. Stylistic inconsistency	10. Heterogeneous options
2. Grammatical inconsistency	11. Non-occurrent forms
3. Unfocused stem	12. Impure items or mixed content
4. Window-dressing	13. Wrong item with no key
5. Negatives in the stem and/or options	14. Clues to key:
6. More than one key	(i) <i>Grammatical inconsistency or extraneous cue</i>
7. No key	(ii) <i>Conspicuous key</i>
8. None-of-the-above (NOTA)option	(iii) <i>Giveaway/implausible distractors</i>
9. All-of-the-above (AOTA)option	(iv) <i>Divergent cues</i>
	(v) <i>Convergent cues</i>

Stylistic Inconsistency

This category of IV includes any inconsistencies related to punctuation, capitalisation and spelling. Lack of editing and proofreading results in such inconsistencies and the candidates find them annoying and confusing. Such flaws might create extra anxiety in candidates. On top of that, this type of IV causes the item to lose face validity. When the test-takers notice such inconsistencies in test items, they lose faith and confidence in the test.

Sample MCQ 1

‘David Coperfield’ is a/an _____ novel.

- (a) Victorian
- (b) Eligabethan
- (c) Romantic
- (d) Modern

[Source: Original Question Paper; 2016]

Sample MCQ 1 contains two spelling mistakes: one (Coperfield) in the stem and the other (Elegabethan) in the options. Another stylistic error in the stem involves putting the title of a novel within single inverted commas instead of italicising it.

Grammatical Inconsistency

This type of item violation includes any grammatical inaccuracy in the wording of the stem or options, grammatical inconsistency between the options, or grammatically unparallel options. The following item (Sample MCQ 2) contains grammatical inconsistency both in the stem and in the option:

Sample MCQ 2

A speech of too many word is called a –

- (a) big speech
- (b) maiden speech
- (c) unimportant speech
- (d) verbose speech

[Source: Original Question Paper; 2017]

In Sample MCQ 2, option *d* is the key. Unlike options *a*, *b* and *d*, option *c* is grammatically inconsistent with the stem because ‘a unimportant speech’ is grammatically incorrect. Again, the phrase ‘too many word’ in the stem is also incorrect: it should be ‘too many words’. Such grammatical inconsistencies often provide cues to the test-wise candidates who can easily eliminate one or two distractors. Thus, grammatical inconsistencies make an item less discriminating, less reliable and less valid.

Unfocused Stem

This category of IV occurs when the problem or central idea of the MCQ item is included not in the stem, but in the options.

Sample MCQ 3

It should be _____.

- (a) her with whom you share your ideas, not me.
- (b) her with whom you share your ideas, not I.
- (c) she with whom you share your ideas, not me.
- (d) she with whom you share your ideas, not I.

[Source: test name and year not mentioned in the original question]

The stem of Sample MCQ 3 is unfocused as it does not ask any questions or set any task for the candidate to do. In this case, the candidate ‘must read all of the options to discern what is being asked’ (DiSantis et al., 2015, p. 699). Besides, unlike options *b*, *c*, or *d*, option *a* does not have a period at the end, which is an inconsistency related to mechanics.

Window-dressing

This type of IV involves gratuitous or unnecessary information in the stem or the options (Tarrant et al., 2006). MCQ items with this category of IV greatly reduce the efficiency of a test as they reduce the amount of information available from a given period of time available for testing (Henning, 2012). The unnecessary information demands extra time from the actual time available for the candidates to read the item. Such flawed items are also irritating and confusing for test-takers. Again, window-dressing might also make an MCQ item more difficult, less discriminating, less reliable and less valid (Brookhart & Nitko, 2015).

Sample MCQ 4

Choose the correct sentence:

- (a) He refrained to take any drastic action
- (b) He refrained on taking any drastic action
- (c) He refrained in taking any drastic action
- (d) He refrained from taking any drastic action

[Source: Original Question Paper; 2017]

Sample MCQ 4 involves unnecessary repetition. It could be rewritten in the gap-fill format, with the following stem: *He refrained _____ any drastic action* and options: *(a) to take, (b) on taking, (c) in taking and (d) from taking*. Again, none of the options has a period at the end, which is an inconsistency related to mechanics.

Negatives in the Stem and/or Options

This type of IV involves the use of negatives (e.g. *not*, *except*, *incorrect*, etc.) in the stem or the options. It is quicker and easier to construct MCQ items with negatives and sometimes the correct answer (in this case, the incorrect options) is so obviously incorrect that test-takers can easily identify (Tarrant et al., 2006). Such items, like Sample MCQ 5, actually assess the candidates' ability of reverse thinking. Again, even if a test-taker successfully identifies the incorrect information as the key, it does not necessarily indicate that he/she is cognizant of the correct information (Burton et al., 1991). Thus, MCQs with negatives in the stem and/or the options become less discriminating and less reliable.

Sample MCQ 5

Which one of the following does not mean 'a road'?

- (a) Alley
- (b) Boulevard
- (c) Track
- (d) Lagoon

[Source: test name and year not mentioned in the original question]

More than One Key

This category of IV occurs when 'more than one response option is correct' (Coombe et al., 2007, p. 23). Carelessness in item writing and moderation allows this type of IV to creep into an MCQ. This type of IV confuses candidates, kills their exam time and creates anxiety in them, which might hamper their overall performance on a test.

Sample MCQ 6

Which one of the following words is an example of a distributive pronoun?

- (a) such
- (b) either
- (c) that
- (d) each

[Source: Original Question Paper; 2017]

Sample MCQ 6 contains two keys – options *b* and *d* – because both 'either' and 'each' are distributive pronouns. Such items also engender further difficulties: test providers are to take special decisions related to scoring such items and personnel involved in scoring are required to do some extra work with greater caution for the implementation of the decision. Such flaws in MCQs reduce the face validity of tests.

No Key

This type of IV takes place when the key is missing from the list of response options. The item writer might simply forget to include the correct answer in the list (Coombe et al., 2007). Like the ‘more-than-one-key’ item violation, this also indicates lack of care and professionalism in item writing and moderation.

Sample MCQ 7

‘Who planted this tree here?’ The correct passive voice of this sentence is-

- (a) By whom the tree was planted here?
- (b) Who the tree had been planted hereby?
- (c) The tree was planted here by whom?
- (d) By whom had the tree been planted here?

[Source: Original Question Paper; 2016]

In Sample MCQ 7, none of the response options is the key. Items with no key have disadvantages similar to the ones with more than one key.

None-of-the-above (NOTA) Option

This category of IV actually measures test-takers’ ability to detect incorrect options. Item writers might use this option when they are not ready to spend enough time on item development. NOTA options, like AOTA options, giveaway distractors and non-occurrent forms, weaken the team of distractors, which results in the weakening of the ‘functional association between the discrimination of the correct answer and the collective discrimination of the distractors’ (Haladyna et al., 2019, p. 351). Although research evidence in regard to item discrimination of MCQs with the NOTA option is largely inconclusive, DiBattista, Sinnige-Egger and Fortuna (2014) found that when the NOTA option is the key, the score obtained by the test-takers with knowledge deficiency ‘can make the item appear to have more discriminatory power than is actually the case’ (p. 168). Consequently, the reliability of test items suffers.

Sample MCQ 8

She *took into her head* to leave her job in no time and go to her parents.

- (a) half-heartedly decided
- (b) a sudden idea
- (c) after careful thought
- (d) none of these

[Source: Original Question Paper; 2017]

Sample MCQ 8 provides evidence that the item writer included NOTA as a response option probably because of his unwillingness to spend enough time in creating another effective distractor. Options *a*, *b* and *c* are heterogeneous and options *b* and *c* do not fit the stem at all. Only option *a*, which is a verb phrase, can replace the italicised verb phrase in the stem, so candidates might easily dismiss the NOTA option along with the other two.

All-of-the-above (AOTA) Option

This type of IV might enable test-takers to easily identify the AOTA option as the key if they simply know that at least two of the options are correct; similarly, they can eliminate it by knowing if only one of the options is incorrect (Brookhart & Nitko, 2015; Tarrant et al., 2006).

Sample MCQ 9

It has been proved *upto the hilt* that Rahman's intentions are bad.

- (a) completely
- (b) up to final decision
- (c) final outcome
- (d) all of these

[Source: Original Question Paper; 2017]

In Sample MCQ 9, option *d* can be easily eliminated because *a*, *b* and *c* are heterogeneous in terms of both grammar and meaning and as such all of them cannot fit the stem. This category of IV affects an item's ability to discriminate as well as its reliability.

Heterogeneous Options

This flaw prevents an MCQ item from focusing the test-takers on the main idea of the item, thus reducing its discrimination. Heterogeneous options increase the chances of easily eliminating some distractors for students. When one or two response options are so different and do not fit the stem at all, the test-takers might find it easier to identify the key even without having adequate knowledge. This is clearly illustrated by Sample MCQs 8 and 9, where the heterogeneity of response options provides logical cues to test-takers regarding the correct answer.

Non-occurrent Forms

This type of IV involves use of inappropriate structures of the language and through using MCQs with this category of IV, it is possible to teach errors to the beginning-level learners (Henning, 2012, p. 34).

Sample MCQ 10

Tourists _____ their reservations well in advance if they want to fly to Cox's Bazar.

- (a) better to had get
- (b) had better to get
- (c) had better got
- (d) had better get

[Source: Original Question Paper; 2017]

In Sample MCQ 10, option *a* (better to had get) presents a non-occurrent form because forms like 'to had' or 'had get' do not exist in English.

Sample MCQ 11

The decoration of the new office block, including the furniture and curtains, _____

- (a) is more pleasing
- (b) is most pleasing
- (c) are more pleasing
- (d) have more pleasing

[Source: Test Bank; 2016]

In the similar vein, *option d* (have more pleasing) in Sample MCQ 11 is never used in English. Thus such items might create negative backwash on the learning of the language.

Impure Items or Mixed Content

This flaw occurs when an MCQ item tests more than one thing (e.g. both tense and spelling, or relative pronoun and subject-verb agreement). It affects the validity of test items because such items test more than they intend to.

Sample MCQ 12

Please vote for the member _____ has done the most for our village.

- (a) who you believe
- (b) who you believed
- (c) that you believe

- (d) whom you believe

[Source: Test Bank; 2016]

Sample MCQ 12 is intended to assess candidates' knowledge of relative pronouns, but the item includes *option b* which also measures knowledge of tenses.

Wrong Item with No Key

Sometimes an MCQ item might be completely wrong and as such without key, for example, because of containing some other flaws.

Sample MCQ 13

'Strike while the iron is hot' is an example of __

- (a) Noun clause
- (b) Adjective clause
- (c) Adverbial clause
- (d) Subordinate clause

[Source: Original Question Paper; 2017]

Sample MCQ 14

Sitting happily, the chicken laid eggs. The underlined part is a/an __

- (a) noun clause
- (b) subordinate clause
- (c) independent clause
- (d) coordinate clause

[Source: Original Question Paper; 2022]

Sample MCQ 13 is a wrong item because no clause has been italicised or underlined to mark the relevant segment of the example sentence to be identified as an example of the clause categories mentioned in the options. Resultantly, this item does not have any key as '*Strike the iron while it is hot*' is not a clause, rather a complex sentence consisting of a main clause and a subordinate clause. Thus, a minor breach of mechanics has resulted in a flawed MCQ.

Taking clues from the options, we can probably understand that '*while it is hot*' is the problem point in the stem. However, *option d* shares an overlap with *options a, b* and *c* because they represent sub-categories of *option d*. For the same reason, there are technically two keys in this MCQ: one is *option d* and the other is *option c*. *Option d* could be written as 'principal clause' instead of 'subordinate clause' to avoid this added confusion.

Again, Sample MCQ 14 is a wrong item with no key because the underlined portion in the stem 'Sitting happily' is a phrase, not a clause.

Clues to the Key

This category of IV provides the test-takers with indirect hints to the correct answer. It might enable the test-wise candidates to identify the correct answers without proper knowledge of the content. Sometimes, candidates can easily eliminate some options by using the available clues, which reduces item difficulty. Thus, items with this type of IV might not properly discriminate between candidates, which would reduce the reliability of test results. The clues that tend to creep into MCQs are discussed as follows.

- (i) **Grammatical inconsistency or extraneous cue:** Some choices stand out because of grammatical inconsistencies, making the task of choosing the key easier for candidates. Sample MCQs 2 and 15 are two illustrative examples containing this item violation. In Sample MCQ 2, candidates can easily eliminate *option c* (unimportant speech) using hints from the obvious grammatical inconsistency between the stem and the option: *a unimportant speech*.

Sample MCQ 15

'Leave no stone unturned' means _____

- (a) heavy stone
- (b) impossible
- (c) rare stone
- (d) try every possible means

[Source: Original Question Paper; 2019]

Again, in Sample MCQ 15, *options a* and *c* are noun phrases, *option b* is an adjective and *option d* is a verbal phrase. Obviously, *option d* is the only option that falls into the same grammatical category as the idiomatic verbal phrase 'leave no stone unturned'. Thus, this MCQ offers candidates a clear grammatical cue for selecting the key.

- (ii) **Conspicuous key:** If the identification of the key requires only common knowledge, item difficulty tends to be zero and the item completely fails to discriminate between candidates.

Sample MCQ 16 Which is the noun form of the word 'brief'?

- (a) briefly
- (b) brevity
- (c) brieve
- (d) but

[Source: Original Question Paper; 2019]

Sample MCQ 16, purported to measure test-takers' knowledge of noun formation, exemplifies this item violation. In this item, *option d* presents a giveaway distractor which candidates can easily eliminate; *option a* (briefly) contains *-ly* adverb suffix; *option c* (brieve), albeit a non-occurrent form, has a verb-like ending *-ieve* as in *achieve* and *perceive*; therefore, it becomes clear that *option b* is the key. Again, the *-ity* suffix in *option b* (brevity) confirms its being the answer.

- (iii) **Giveaway/implausible distractors:** Candidates can easily eliminate blatantly absurd or ridiculous response options as they pose no linguistic challenges to the test-takers. As the giveaway or implausible distractors do not distract at all, they affect an item's 'ability to discriminate among examinees with varying degrees of ability' (Haladyna et al., 2019, p. 350). These less discriminating items are not reliable at all.

Sample MCQ 17

The correct passive form of 'You must shut these doors' is __

- (a) These must be shut doors
- (b) Shut the doors you must
- (c) Shut must be the doors
- (d) These doors must be shut

[Source: Original Question Paper; 2015]

In Sample MCQ 17, *choices a, b* and *c* are absurd or ridiculous and as such can be eliminated very easily. Further, the options in this item are not properly punctuated: the period is missing at the end.

- (iv) **Divergent cues:** This category of IV might 'occur when one option gives greater length or specificity of information' (Henning, 2012, p. 35) or is very different from other choices. Such flaws in items benefit test-wise examinees.

Sample MCQ 18

Someone who is capricious is _____

- (a) easily irritated
- (b) wise and willing to cooperate
- (c) exceedingly conceited and arrogant
- (d) known for sudden changes in attitude or behaviour

[Source: Original Question Paper; 2019]

In Sample MCQ 18, *option d* which is the key is far greater in length than other options and provides more information for the candidates to consider while choosing the answer.

- (v) **Convergent cues:** This category of IV occurs when pairs or triplets of choices share similarities or content overlap, providing the candidates with hints to the right answer.

Sample MCQ 19

‘Camouflage’ means _____

- (a) disguise
- (b) difficult
- (c) heavy
- (d) dangerous

[Source: Original Question Paper; 2018]

In Sample MCQ 19, *options b, c and d* belong to the same grammatical category (adjective) and so *option a* stands out to be different from them. Like the word ‘Camouflage’ of which the meaning is to be chosen, the word ‘disguise’ in *option d* can be used as both verb and noun. Test-wise candidates can easily benefit from such clues to the correct answer.

Discussion

The occurrence of the 18 IVs analysed above, along with a few other item flaws, has been reported in research literature. Most of the available studies (e.g. Hijji, 2017; Tarrant et al., 2006) reported on IVs in MCQs used in disciplines other than English language studies (e.g. the nursing and medical sciences) in different assessment contexts and hence data are scarce in regard to IVs in the MCQs used in the assessment of English abilities. These studies explored the frequency of IVs in MCQs as well as their effect on the test scores, both of which are, however, beyond the purview of the current study. Its scope is, instead, restricted only to an analysis of the various categories of IVs with illustrative examples and, a fortiori, this study will be useful to item writers across disciplines. Importantly and relevant to this study, Uddin (2018) identified 16 IVs of which 15 have been analysed in the current study. The three IVs not identified in his study are ‘Negatives in the stem and/or options’, ‘Conspicuous key’ and ‘Divergent cues’ and this can be explained by the fact that he considered MCQs only from original question papers, not from test banks available in the market.

The analysis of the MCQ IVs presented in this chapter underscores several points concerning MCQ item development for the high-stakes recruitment tests in Bangladesh. Most importantly, it may be assumed that the steps of item writing, item moderation and trialling of the items are not followed with adequate rigour and professionalism. In addition, the analysis tends to hint at a sheer lack of accountability on the part of the item writers, moderators and, above all, test providers as the IVs are found to have occurred in the tests for quite a long time between 2015 and 2022. Although the current study does not report on the frequency of the IVs, the nature of the flaws analysed confirms the amount of carelessness and mishandling on the part of those involved in the construction of the MCQs. One final observation may also be made that the personnel involved in MCQ design lacked the required assessment literacy and training.

It is expected that the assessment-literate item writers will have adequate knowledge of the accepted guidelines for MCQ item writing. They also need to be cognizant of the most recent practices and developments in assessment and testing. Apart from having the theoretical knowledge, the item writers have to be properly trained in MCQ item writing. This need of enhancing the assessment literacy of item writers through theoretical understanding and hands-on training has been stressed in numerous studies (e.g. Ahmed et al., 2021; Hijji, 2017; Reichert, 2011).

Conclusion

Multiple Choice Questions are extensively used in the recruitment tests in Bangladesh, particularly in their preliminary phases. These preliminary tests serve a gate-keeping function by allowing only those candidates who obtain a set passing score to sit for the written test. That is, even marginal fluctuations or anomalies in the scores candidates receive play a vital role in their success or failure to qualify for taking the written test. If item violations are allowed to occur in MCQs used in these tests, it will certainly lead to unreliable test scores and erroneous decisions in regard to allowing or disallowing candidates to take the written test. The decisions based on an erroneous interpretation of the scores contribute to negative test impact. These unreliable scores thus unfairly require some candidates to resume the preparation for the next preliminary examination and allow some others to prepare for the written test. Thus the use of flawed MCQs might tax heavily on the time, money and efforts of some candidates and leave adverse effects on their career and family. On top of that, the validity of these tests suffers and stakeholders lose faith in them. Alongside recruitment tests, MCQs are also used in wider assessment contexts in the country, for example, in classroom assessment, placement tests or university admission tests and professional qualification tests (e.g. the Supreme Court Bar Council Enrolment Examination). Therefore, MCQs must be written following the accepted principles of item writing and items should not be included in tests until they are properly edited, moderated and trialled with a view to avoiding the possible flaws that tend to continue to exist in items even if great care is taken in their construction. In this regard, the item writers and moderators in Bangladesh can pay special attention to avoiding the common MCQ item violations discussed in this chapter and presented as a checklist in Appendix I. If such a checklist is used as a guideline during item construction and moderation, it might lead to the enhancement of the quality of the MCQ items included on these tests in the future. Although this chapter focuses its attention on the MCQs used to assess candidates' English language ability for recruitment purposes in the Bangladesh context, its implications are applicable to MCQs used in other sections (e.g. Bangla language and literature, general knowledge, general mathematics and so on) of these tests as well as to those used in other tests in the same context. The implications can, of course, be universally applied to all contexts of MCQ use beyond Bangladesh as well.

Acknowledgement This chapter originates from a paper, titled ‘Investigating Prevalence of MCQ Item Violations in High-stakes Bangladeshi Recruitment Tests’, which I presented at the 27th MELTA International Conference held in Johor Bahru, Malaysia on August 18-20, 2018. I express my special indebtedness to the Bangladesh English Language Teachers Association (BELTA), for nominating me as the BELTA representative to the conference, as well as to the Malaysian English Language Teaching Association (MELTA), for inviting me as a featured presenter.

Appendix I: Checklist of MCQ Item Violations to Avoid

No.	MCQ item violations	Description
1	Stylistic inconsistency	An item contains inconsistencies related to punctuation, capitalisation and spelling.
2	Grammatical inconsistency	An item contains grammatical inaccuracy in the wording of the stem or options, or grammatical inconsistency between the options.
3	Unfocused stem	The central idea or problem is included not in the stem, but in the options.
4	Window-dressing	Unnecessary information is contained in the stem or the options.
5	Negatives in the stem and/or options	Negatives (e.g. <i>not</i> , <i>except</i> , <i>incorrect</i> , etc.) are used in the stem or the options.
6	More than one key	More than one response option is the correct answer.
7	No key	None of the response options is the correct answer.
8	None-of-the-above (NOTA) option	‘None of the above’ is used as the last response option.
9	All-of-the-above (AOTA) option	‘All of the above’ is used as the last response option.
10	Heterogeneous options	One or two response options are very different in terms of grammatical category or content and do not fit the stem at all.
11	Non-occurrent forms	Response options contain structures that are never used in English.
12	Impure items or mixed content	An item tests more than one thing (e.g. both tense and spelling, or both relative pronoun and subject-verb agreement).
13	Wrong item with no key	An item might be completely wrong and as such without key because of containing some other item violations.

(continued)

(continued)

No.	MCQ item violations	Description
14	Clues to key (Grammatical inconsistency or extraneous cue)	Grammatical inconsistencies in options help test-takers choose the key easily.
15	Clues to key (Conspicuous key)	Identification of the correct answer requires only common knowledge.
16	Clues to key (Giveaway/ implausible distractors)	An item includes blatantly absurd or ridiculous response options which pose no linguistic challenges to the test-takers.
17	Clues to key (Divergent cues)	One option provides greater length or specificity of information.
18	Clues to key (Convergent cues)	Pairs/triplets of choices share similarities or content overlap, providing the candidates with hints to the right answer.

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Part VI
Teacher Education

Chapter 25

Researching and Developing Teacher Expertise in the Global South: Local and Transferable Solutions



Jason Anderson

Abstract This chapter explores the theoretical and practical challenges and affordances involved in researching, developing and disseminating teacher expertise on a local scale in the Global South. It considers a key paradox that often undermines such efforts: how to develop quality without “importing” models, approaches and practices from northern educational systems that are often inappropriate for southern contexts. In addition to discussing a number of possible solutions for strengthening local expertise, the chapter provides a detailed description of one of these carried out by the author—a participatory case study of teacher expertise in Indian secondary education. As well as offering findings of importance to our understanding of teacher expertise in India, the approach adopted succeeded in making a comparative case study participatory, with the teachers both contributing to research questions and identifying other outputs of use to them and their colleagues. The chapter concludes by proposing a model for strengthening classroom practice and teacher education within national and regional contexts that draws upon both indigenous teacher expertise and teacher classroom research to offer a sustainable means for building context-specific prototypes of teacher expertise that may be of use in contexts across the Global South.

Keywords Teacher expertise · Local expertise · Teacher research · Exploratory case studies · Global South

Introduction

Educational systems around the world are today focusing interest on issues of quality: quality in school leadership and effectiveness, quality in curricula and educational policy, and, most importantly for teacher education, quality in the classroom. Since the turn of the twenty-first century, many countries across the Global South have made impressive gains towards the second UN Millennium Development Goal of achieving

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universal primary education and are directing attention towards the fourth Sustainable Development Goal to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” (United Nations, 2019, p. 7). However, as a number of commentators have identified (e.g. Alexander, 2015; Muralidharan, 2017), policy documents of both national and international bodies rarely offer useful detail concerning what Alexander calls “the missing ingredient” (2015, p. 254) in accounts of educational quality—pedagogy. He notes that “...the striking feature of the GMRs [global monitoring reports] is that they do not so much engage with pedagogy as circle around it”, leaving it “securely locked in its black box” (2015, p. 253).

This lack of description of appropriate effective pedagogic practice for lower-income contexts often leads to ministries and development partners (e.g. British Council, UNICEF) attempting to “import” conceptions of appropriate good practice in pedagogy from higher-income systems, which are often inappropriate or unimplementable in lower-income contexts (see, e.g. Amone, 2021). Equally common is the practice of policy documents reducing descriptors relating to pedagogy to *soundbites* of quality, as in the recent Indian National Education Policy: “Pedagogy must evolve to make education more experiential, holistic, integrated, inquiry-driven, discovery-oriented, learner-centred, discussion-based, flexible, and, of course, enjoyable” (Government of India, 2020, p. 3). Alas, none of these terms are unpacked in sufficient detail in this document to enable relevant bodies to implement such policy, leaving more questions than answers: “What does effective learner-centred education in Indian classrooms look like?” (see Schweisfurth, 2013), and “Is discovery-oriented education likely to be more effective in challenging contexts than more direct modes of instruction?”; the evidence does not necessarily support this (see Hattie, 2009). If these questions cannot be answered in ways that are useful to those attempting to implement the policy, the reference to such constructs remains largely rhetorical, offering little practical guidance of use to teacher education, and moving us no closer to our goal of identifying effective practices for classrooms in low-income countries.

In English language teaching (ELT), this is a particular challenge, given that the subject focus (English) is inextricably linked to the processes of Westernization. Several authors (e.g. Anderson, 2021; Holliday, 1994; Phillipson, 1992) have cautioned against assuming that models of best practice from the western “Centre” (Phillipson, 1992, p. 52) of ELT can be imported into educational systems around the world. Holliday (1994) observes that such attempts often lead to “tissue rejection”, when an intended innovation “does not become an effectively functioning part of the system” (p. 134). Yet, despite this, a discourse of assumed best practice continues to emerge, particularly from the more psycho-cognitive second language acquisition (SLA) literature, typically recommending variations of task-based language teaching (TBLT; e.g. Ellis, 2019; Long, 2015), despite sustained evidence of local, even systematic failure in attempts to implement TBLT approaches. In China, for example, evidence of low uptake and widespread misunderstandings of TBLT among Chinese teachers (e.g. Luo & Xing, 2015; Zhu-Xiu, 2017) has triggered a recent shift in emphasis away from TBLT in national curricula towards a “core competencies” approach, more closely integrated with other areas of the wider Chinese curriculum

(Wang & Luo, 2019). It is clear that, as both educational funding and student achievement increase, China's dependence on such exogenous models of best practice is diminishing, but what about other, lower-income countries in sub-Saharan Africa or South Asia, where typical per student investments in state-sponsored education are a fraction of those in the Global North? Such countries may lack the funding to do likewise.

This chapter explores the question of how educational systems around the world can develop models of appropriate, good pedagogy based on indigenous teacher expertise. While the potential solutions described may be of use to any educational system, primary consideration is given to the often-overlooked contexts and challenges typically found in the Global South, where lower levels of educational funding can lead to challenges rarely experienced in more privileged contexts. While many of the examples cited come from English language teaching (ELT), the solutions offered are potentially appropriate for teaching, teacher education and policy making for all subjects.

The next section of the chapter explores a number of “bottom-up” solutions to developing expertise that have recently demonstrated both feasibility and impact across a wide range of contexts. This will be followed by an in-depth look at a more specific means to build the knowledge base on indigenous good practice through the use of comparative case studies of expert teachers working in low-income contexts, including an example study from India conducted by the author (Anderson, 2021). The chapter concludes by suggesting how several of these solutions could be combined to build an “expert teacher prototype” (Sternberg & Horvath, 1995) for the context in question.

In this chapter, I use the terms “Global South”, “southern (e.g. contexts)” and “developing countries” to refer to countries, or states that fall into either low- or lower-middle-income GDP bands (World Bank, 2019), aware that such terms cast broad generalisations on global regional difference, and that other authors theorise these terms differently (e.g. Pennycook & Makoni, 2020). My choice is based primarily on the fact that funding continues to remain a primary influence on the possibilities and constraints influencing educational systems worldwide. In India, for example, annual government per student expenditure averages less than 2% (200 US dollars) of the 10,000 US dollars spent, on average, in OECD countries (OECD, 2020).

Localising Research: Established Exploratory Approaches

Perhaps the most obvious starting point for building indigenous models of good pedagogy is research. However, this suggestion must immediately be followed by a caution because much research being conducted into pedagogic practices in developing countries involves either macro-level investigation of the type that Alexander (e.g. 2015) is critical of—treating teachers, learners, and other stakeholders as anonymous subjects in econometric evaluation studies (see, e.g. Masino & Nino-Zarazua, 2016)—or attempts to introduce exogenous models through intervention studies

(see Westbrook, Durrani, Brown, Orr, Pryor, Boddy, & Salvi, 2013); this latter choice being particularly common in English language teaching, as both researchers and research students frequently opt to investigate the introduction of western-developed approaches (especially communicative language teaching) into southern contexts—sometimes demonstrating impact, but not necessarily sustainability (see, e.g. contributions to Tribble, 2012).

However, rather than starting from such hypothesis-testing approaches that ask “What would happen if we introduced X here?”, research can begin by exploring the “here” to understand it better: our classrooms, our lessons and our challenges. In this way, any potential changes are both informed by and responsive to local conditions and needs, helping us to strengthen, rather than replace, current practice. Three approaches to teacher-led research that have demonstrated sustainability and impact in language teaching aim to do precisely this: exploratory action research, exploratory practice and lesson study.

Exploratory Action Research

Developed by Richard Smith and colleagues, exploratory action research (EAR) usually involves a modified version of the teacher action research “cycle” in which, rather than beginning with a change intervention, teacher-researchers are encouraged to conduct an initial research cycle in which they explore aspects of their context before seeking to make any change. If and when required (sometimes the understanding gained is sufficient to address a problem), this is followed by a change that seeks, in some way, to improve, support or extend learning within the same classroom or school context and then to evaluate the impact of this change (Smith & Rebolledo, 2018). As in most action research, teacher-researchers engaging in EAR are supported by mentors, who, as well as offering support during the processes of data collection and analysis, help to develop teacher-researchers’ analytical, reflective and planning skills (Smith, 2020). These skills are obviously useful to all teachers in themselves, particularly when they are developed in-service and in-context, but also empower teachers with the ability to conduct further research in the future in their own contexts as and when required.

A large number of EAR projects have been carried out successfully in southern contexts, especially Latin America and South Asia (e.g. Rebolledo, Smith, & Bullock, 2016). There are a large number of tools and free publications available for teachers, organisations and educational departments interested in conducting EAR projects (e.g. Rebolledo et al., 2016; Smith, 2020; Smith & Rebolledo, 2018), as well as international initiatives potentially capable of supporting individual teachers interested in engaging in EAR independently of local support, if required (e.g. the IATEFL Research SIG).

Exploratory Practice

Developed in the 1990s by Dick Allwright and colleagues, due primarily to a concern that standard models for teacher action research were often creating more problems (especially excessive workload) than they solved (Allwright, 2005), exploratory practice involves teachers working with their learners collaboratively to understand situations and puzzles rather than solving problems, what Hanks (2017) calls “starting with a ‘why’ question, rather than a ‘how’ or ‘how to’” (p. 119). The ultimate goal of exploratory practice is to improve “quality of life” for the classroom community (teachers and learners together), rather than improving “output” (Allwright, 2005, p. 353). Allwright suggests six principles that should guide exploratory practice:

1. Put “quality of life” first.
2. Work primarily to understand language classroom life.
3. Involve everybody.
4. Work to bring people together.
5. Work also for mutual development.
6. Make the work a continuous enterprise (2005, p. 360)

Exploratory practice, like EAR, has proven useful to teachers working around the world, particularly in Brazil (e.g. Miller, Côrtes, Oliveira & Braga, 2015), but also in Turkey and the Far East (see Hanks, 2017).

Lesson Study

Originating in Japan as long ago as the 1870s (Dudley, 2014), lesson study is an approach to teacher-led research that centralises the lesson as an object of focus for collaborative interaction among teachers of the same subject (Rappeleye & Komatsu, 2017). While a number of variants exist, a typical lesson study cycle begins with the identification of a specific learning outcome or aim by a group of teachers. Together they plan a “research lesson” (Dudley, 2014) intended to achieve this outcome, and one member of the group teaches this lesson, ideally to their own students, while the others observe, either live or via video recording. Afterwards, the teachers meet to reflect on the research lesson, critique it (with sensitivity to the teacher) and suggest improvements before another member of the group teaches it to their learners. This cycle continues until the group feel the lesson achieves its aims in a range of classrooms and may include preparing a range of potential resources for delivering the lesson. A different aim then becomes the focus for the next lesson study cycle (Rappeleye & Komatsu, 2017). Dudley (e.g. 2014) also recommends the identification of several “case pupils” who can become a focus for both the peer-observation component and possible interviews after the research lesson to gain further insights into the lesson’s impact.

While lesson study has primarily had an impact in more privileged contexts in the Global North, there is also evidence of success in southern contexts (e.g. Ansawi &

Pang, 2017), although challenges are also sometimes noted (e.g. Siddiquee & Kubota, 2018). Given the relatively low-resource nature of lesson study and increased availability of video recording technology, it is possible that it may play a useful role in supporting teacher development in school clusters as well as improving teaching materials and, ultimately, contributing to local teacher expertise.

Expanding the Options for Exploratory Participatory Research

All of the above options for exploratory research are teacher-led and typically involve a change or innovation of some sort. While these two design features are likely to be key to the success of the approaches—enabling teachers to try out new ideas and explore possible options for change in their contexts—they also impose a number of potential limitations on the range of outcomes and insight that such research can provide, which are here explored critically.

Firstly, while the introduction of change into one's classroom can lead to useful insights, it can also cause us to overlook existing effective practices in a given context; changes introduced often involve exogenous activities, materials and approaches that at times can be less effective or appropriate than those they replace. A common example of this in ELT is the attempts to introduce communicative speaking practice in large classes, which can be time-consuming, culturally inappropriate, and may have less relevance to assessed curricula objectives when compared to, say, collaborative writing as an alternative means for learners to engage in productive skills practice. While the exploratory phase of EAR is designed, in part, to reduce this danger, such interventive approaches are not best tailored to documenting and disseminating existing effective practices.

Secondly, while many teachers are experts of their own context, few are also experts in conducting research, which necessarily has implications. The first of these is the extensive time and effort required for teachers to learn and then apply appropriate research skills (Burns, 2009). The second is the possibility that, because of this lack of research expertise and/or mentoring support, teachers may commit mistakes in the process, potentially leading to their making changes in their practice that do not necessarily lead to improvements in learning. A common example of this is the presence of bias in a teacher's interviewing practices—for instance by asking leading questions to learners—that may cause interviewees to provide answers that they think a teacher wants to hear, rather than revealing their true opinions.

A final issue involves the usually fairly limited dissemination of the findings of teacher research projects. While a small number of higher quality studies do find their way into journals or research reports, partly because of the small scale of such projects and the challenges that teachers face in conducting research (see above), findings are typically shared only in local teacher research communities. Even in some contexts where teacher research is widespread—such as Bangladesh, where it is integrated into

teacher education curricula—potential mechanisms for dissemination (e.g. teacher-accessible databases of abstracts and findings) or reviews of common findings may not exist. This is often exacerbated, unfortunately, by perceptions among academics and policymakers that teacher research is unreliable and should not be drawn upon to influence policy or pedagogic practice in teacher education.

Thus, if these arguments are accepted, in addition to the teacher-led research discussed above, a need can also be identified for exploratory research on classroom practice that primarily investigates existing conditions and practices (e.g. case study research) and engages the expertise of researchers to work alongside teachers to increase the likelihood that research findings are valid, reliable and insightful enough to justify wider dissemination and build models of good, local practice. This was the challenge I embraced when designing my PhD study.

A Participatory Case Study of Teacher Expertise in a Southern Context

Case study research into teacher expertise dates back to work of David Berliner and colleagues in the 1980s (Berliner, 2004) and is based on the premise that, providing expert teachers can be identified reliably, documenting and disseminating their practice is of potential use in multiple ways, particularly in building what Sternberg and Horvath (1995) call an “expert teacher prototype” for a given teaching context. Such prototypes can inform pedagogic models for pre-service teacher education, in-service teacher development, curriculum and materials design, as well as policy documentation. As such, teacher expertise studies seem ideally placed to enable us to identify effective pedagogic practices in low-income countries.

Despite this observation, it is striking that of over 100 empirical studies conducted on teacher expertise to date, almost all involve teachers working in the Global North, predominantly North America, Western Europe and higher-income provinces of China (Anderson, 2021). It may be assumed by many researchers that teacher expertise is rare or non-existent in the Global South, due, perhaps, to the contextual challenges inhibiting its development—however, my personal experience as a teacher educator indicates otherwise. I have had the opportunity to work with numerous teachers across both sub-Saharan Africa and Asia, and they have varied greatly in their effectiveness. Among the more effective ones are many who meet selection criteria for teacher expertise studies (see Palmer, Burdenski, & Gonzales, 2005). It was likely this experience that prompted me to choose such a focus for my mid-career PhD, despite the almost complete lack of prior attempts to study teacher expertise in the Global South.

The Challenges of Conducting a Teacher Expertise Study in the Global South

At the outset of the study, I identified three key challenges that I needed to solve as follows:

1. How to define expertise appropriately without imposing exogenous (Northern/Western) theories that might bias the study and its findings?
2. How to find participants whose expertise was consistent with the definition adopted?
3. How to make the study as inclusive, non-exploitative and mutually beneficial as possible, given my own background as a teacher educator from the Global North?

Each of these challenges is explored below.

Theorising Expertise Appropriately

During my review of the literature on teacher expertise, it became apparent that expertise is often defined in one of several ways which broadly fit into two groups: criterion-referenced and norm-referenced definitions of expertise. The former of these (criterion-referenced definitions) tend towards the description of specific competencies, skills or even processes that characterise expertise. The latter (norm-referenced definitions) typically focus on one of two areas, either the teacher's impact on learner outcomes (e.g. exam achievement) or the teacher's recognition and status within a given community. I noticed that criterion-referencing was more susceptible to the influence of the researcher's background and implicit assumptions regarding the specific features and practices of expert teachers. As such, I deemed it inappropriate for a cross-cultural study, particularly in a country where very little is known about appropriate good pedagogic practice. In contrast, norm-referencing offered a potential means for experts to be identified through their local communities, social norms and value systems. This led to my formulating the following definition of teacher expertise, drawing in part on both Rampton's (1990) and Bucci's (2003) discussions of situated expertise: Teacher expertise is an enacted amalgam of learnt, context-specific competencies (i.e. embodied knowledge, skills and awareness) that is valued within an educational community as a source of appropriate practice for others to learn from.

Finding Participants for a Teacher Expertise Study

Of a number of options available to me for finding potential participants, the stakeholders of an English language teacher association in India, AINET (<https://www.theainet.net/>), expressed interest in facilitating the study and provided access to its members. This constituted an important first step towards finding participant teachers for two reasons. Firstly, such an association constitutes a valid, if loose, community of practice within which to identify potential expert teachers as per the definition above. Secondly, active participation in teacher associations constitutes an initial, potential marker of teacher expertise, as identified in Palmer et al.'s (2005) meta-analysis; one that involves professional, rather than pedagogic practice, and therefore requires no value judgements relating to the latter.

While many prior teacher expertise studies have drawn upon the opinions of key stakeholders within education (e.g. school inspectors and headteachers) to recommend potential participants for an expertise study (Palmer et al., 2005), I rejected this approach as inappropriate for my study for three principal reasons. Firstly, such an approach is highly susceptible to the personal bias of such stakeholders (Palmer et al., 2005; Tsui, 2005). Secondly, in contexts such as India, where both school inspections and classroom observations are rare—even by headteachers (Bambawale, Hughes, & Lightfoot, 2018)—such stakeholders may lack the necessary information to make appropriate recommendations. Thirdly, I was concerned that such an approach may lead to recommended teachers feeling pressurised to take part, rather than participating because of their interest in the study, a key concern of my third challenge.

Instead, I elected to adopt an original, more equitable approach, inviting expressions of interest from teachers within the community of practice in question. Thus, an “expression of interest” form was distributed to members of the AINET community via appropriate social media channels. The form first provided a detailed description of the study (for transparency), after which it requested respondents to share relevant details concerning context (e.g. school type, curriculum) and basic inclusion criteria (e.g. sufficient experience and a full-time position). The most important item on the form presented a number of potential indicators of expertise, collated critically from Palmer et al.'s (2005) review with consideration of both context and the definition of expertise adopted and asked respondents (initially) to self-assess the applicability of the indicators to themselves. This approach enabled me to search for multiple criteria of expertise, considered more robust by Palmer et al. (2005), whose recommendation for a two-staged approach to participant selection was also adopted.

All respondents who met basic inclusion criteria and indicated at least one criterion of expertise were invited to an interview where these criteria could be further explored, confirmed if possible (and if not, confirmed in situ) and both parties could make informed decisions about participation in the study. Nine of eleven teachers interviewed were able to confirm inclusion criteria; these nine also indicated the presence of at least five potential (e.g. higher qualifications, high student achievement, receipt of awards or scholarships) or likely (e.g. experience working as a

teacher educator, experience presenting at national conferences) indicators of expertise each. All were invited, and agreed, to participate in the study (although one later dropped out due to promotion), indicating that this robust, multiple criteria approach had been successful.

As discussed above, for this selection process to be appropriate, it was important that it was not influenced by my own perceptions regarding good/appropriate pedagogic practice, and this was achieved; none of the chosen indicators of expertise involved me making value judgements on classroom practice, and I had avoided rejecting any applicants who met pre-defined inclusion criteria.

Making the Study Inclusive, Non-exploitative and Mutually Beneficial

By offering the opportunity to participate in the study to all members of the community of practice in question and allowing participants to express interest in the study, rather than targeting nominated teachers, I had moved some way towards achieving one of my equity criteria—to make the study inclusive, at least to members of this community. The two-gated selection process further indicated that these participants were enthusiastic about participating—an important element in making a participatory research project successful.

However, a significant challenge remained: that of making the study non-exploitative. Within the field of education, it can be argued that almost all researcher-led studies are necessarily exploitative of participants to some extent. Inasmuch as participants typically undergo time-consuming procedures such as interviews, or potentially stressful ones, such as lesson observations, such exploitation is so systematic within educational research that it is often either overlooked or deemed acceptable within the greater aims of the research project.

My initial attempts to find participatory research designs that might be appropriate for a case study approach drew a blank. Almost all the literature on participatory research in education tended also to involve participant action research, and almost all case studies of teachers were non-participatory. However, searching further afield, I found evidence of a different way of envisaging participation, particularly in the literature on community development and planning (e.g. Cornwall & Jewkes, 1995; Pretty, 1995). Such literature was particularly useful because it recognised one prerequisite of my study—as a PhD project—that I, as researcher, would be the primary collector of data. This literature frequently discusses different levels or degrees of participant involvement, dating back to Arnstein's (1969, p. 217) "ladder of citizen participation". These typologies, while typically recommending movement towards higher levels of participant control whenever possible, also acknowledge that lower levels of what Pretty (1995, p. 1252) calls "Functional" and "Interactive participation" are also useful; although the same sources also caution against what Pretty calls "Manipulative" or "Passive participation" (p. 1252). As well as recommending

a flexible, iterative and reflexive approach, several of these writers argue that both sides in the research endeavour must benefit from it, and all converge on the belief that, to ensure a study can be called participatory, there must be meaningful interaction at the early design stage, when attention must focus on “how and by whom is the research question formulated and by and for whom are research findings used” (Cornwall & Jewkes, 1995, p. 1668).

With this in mind, I arranged a planning meeting with the participants to discuss key elements of the study, such as its focus, its research questions and logistics. Because I also wanted the study to include outcomes that would be genuinely useful for the participants and their colleagues and some means to offer them voice independently of my findings, I also planned to discuss how they might also produce something of their own; an opportunity for them to share aspects of their expertise/practice with their wider community.

Co-planning the Study

Funding was obtained to enable us to meet together for a one-day workshop to plan aspects of the study together. Prior to this, an online meeting had established the agenda, as follows:

1. Exploration of roles of participants and researcher;
2. The focus of the PhD study;
3. A co-authored publication produced by the participants;
4. Participant group reflection without the researcher;
5. Timetabling of case study visits and practical issues.

Of particular importance to the participatory element of the study were items two and three. Of importance to making it as non-exploitative as possible was item four.

With regard to the focus of the study, we discussed two key issues: to what extent to involve other teachers from their schools in the study as potential points of comparison to them as expert teachers, and what would be the specific focus of the study as identified in the research questions. Participants quickly agreed that, rather than involving their colleagues directly (a number of ethical concerns were voiced with, for example, a “matched pairs” design), it would be better for me only to observe colleagues who felt comfortable and willing to allow me into their classrooms. With regard to the focus of the study, five options were discussed. These included a study of their cognition, a focus on their practice, a comparison of these two, a focus on their lessons only, and a more holistic, ethnographic focus including all of these elements. After lengthy discussion, the participants decided upon the last of these; an ethnographic focus linking their cognition to their practice, their backgrounds and their beliefs. This focus was duly adopted as the primary research question for the individual case studies, as follows (a second research question was more comparative):

What are the features of the pedagogic and professional practice, related cognition and beliefs of expert teachers working in Indian state-sponsored secondary education?

With regard to the potential publication, during the online meeting the participants had expressed interest in contributing to a co-authored book; several options were discussed at length, and while only partial agreement was achieved at this point (the final publication was shaped by decisions made during later meetings as well as the writing process itself), there was clear agreement that they wanted to write about their own challenges and teaching practices as well as offering advice and recommendations, particularly for novice teachers facing similar challenges.

Finally, to reduce the danger of the study being exploitative of them, I provided an opportunity for them to discuss this issue along with any other concerns privately. I also suggested that they elect a group spokesperson and create their own closed social media group separate from our shared group. Upon my return, while a number of requests were made (e.g. all requested copies of data collected with them) and minor concerns expressed (e.g. several were concerned that I might be exploited by local authorities for workshops), there seemed to be a strong consensus that all were happy with how things were progressing.

Further benefits of this meeting included the opportunities to draw on their expertise in detail with regard to, for example, timetabling the study, dealing with practical issues and how we would combat the danger of “reactivity” (Atkinson & Hammersley, 2007), otherwise called “the Observer Effect”. Also important was the opportunity for us to socialise together and bond as a team, reducing the power differential that, nonetheless, inevitably continued to exist to some extent during the subsequent data collection, analysis and completion of the study.

The Participants’ Co-authored Publication

Thanks in part to the participants’ local knowledge, experience and expertise, and the collaborative planning that drew on these, the data collection phases of the study progressed largely without difficulty over the next 13 months. During data analysis, I provided two opportunities for participants to provide respondent validation (member checking), both of my individual case descriptions, and of two chapters comparing their practices in the thesis. After completing this process, participants unanimously agreed to be identified, rather than anonymous in the study, all satisfied—proud even—with how it represented them and their practice. However, perhaps the most rewarding output of the participatory element of the study was the successful collaboration on the co-authored book, which progressed successfully to publication by the teacher association (AINET) that facilitated the research project.

It took several online discussions and one further meeting for participants to agree on the final structure of their chapters. However, once this had been achieved, participants seemed to benefit both from the writing process itself and the opportunity to work collaboratively. First, they worked in “buddy” pairs to provide feedback on each

other's early drafts, and then they had an opportunity to read everyone's contributions before finalisation. Despite early concerns that their chapters may be rather similar, all were struck by how varied they were, due to significant differences in aspects of their pedagogy and beliefs (also documented in the PhD study). Both their chapters and the Preface to the book, written by a third party (Padwad, 2021), provided useful, original, critical triangulation of the findings of my research—none had read my case descriptions when they wrote their contributions. When combined with the largely holistic focus they had adopted, this independence enabled comparison of their accounts of their practice and mine. It was also notable that several of the key shared features identified by Padwad in the Preface were also prominent findings of my study. As such, this publication, aside from its potential practical use for other teachers in India and the opportunity it provided to the participants, also ensured that mine was not the only voice describing their practice, providing the reader with the opportunity to compare these accounts themselves (see Gode, Khomne, Lingala, Mukherjee, Naik Khwaja, Prathikantam, & Tayade, 2021).

The Findings of the PhD Study

While the primary focus of this chapter is not to discuss the findings of the study itself—see Anderson (2021) for these—I feel that it succeeded in its aims to document the features of the expertise of the participant teachers in sufficient detail to be of potential use for teacher education in the context in question (Indian secondary education) and potentially in comparable contexts across South Asia and the Global South.

Among these findings was evidence of highly developed interpersonal practices among all eight participant teachers; the relationships that they built with their learners were fundamental to success in their classrooms. Also of note were the complex multilingual practices in participant teachers' classrooms, something absent from prior language teacher expertise studies (e.g. Li & Zou, 2017; Tsui, 2003). While significant diversity was found in their classroom practice, evidence of a number of strong similarities within this diversity was also illuminating. For example, these eight expert teachers were much more likely than non-participant teachers to provide their learners with independent activities to work on, both individually and collaboratively. Also, the active monitoring practices that they adopted to support learners during activities provided valuable insights into how, even in large classes, experienced teachers can engage in differentiated, individualised instruction and personalised support. Nonetheless, almost all participant teachers also conducted what might be viewed as more "traditional", teacher-led, whole class interactive teaching, typically preceding their use of independent activities in ways that mirrored Adams and Engelmann's (1996) "Direct Instruction", found by Hattie (2009, p. 204–207) to be among the most effective approaches discussed in his meta-analysis. However, perhaps the most important finding of the study was evidence that the practices of

participant teachers were generally consistent—albeit with some important exceptions—with the findings of prior research into teacher expertise around the world, evidence that, even in challenging contexts, expert teachers are able to engage in practices similar to those of their peers in much more highly funded, well-supported educational systems.

A Model for Developing Context-Specific Expertise

This chapter began by arguing that different contexts around the world may require different models of appropriate good pedagogic practice, and highlighted, in particular, discrepancies between the challenges of low-income contexts across the Global South, and assumed “best practice” recommendations that typically originate in very different contexts in the Global North. It then argued for the need to develop expertise locally in southern contexts, suggesting a number of ways in which this may happen. While exploratory action research, exploratory practice and lesson study were discussed as established means for developing teacher expertise at grassroots level, I also suggested that there is a complementary need for larger-scale, non-interventive case studies of teacher expertise which yield findings that are likely to be of wider use to educational systems and I proposed a means whereby such case studies can offer a degree of equity, recognition and voice to participants.

The example study design detailed above is, I believe, replicable, opening the possibility for similar participatory case studies to be conducted in a range of contexts worldwide; these may be funded (or even conducted) by local educational bodies. In this sense, such studies could contribute to the building of what Sternberg and Horvath (1995) call an “expert teacher prototype”, a description of “family resemblance” (p. 9) among expert teachers in a given context that can usefully inform pre-service teacher education models, curricula and policy documents as well as context-sensitive initiatives for in-service teacher education.

A key question that emerges from the above discussion concerns how the different elements for developing teacher expertise locally might interact with each other more systematically. To this end, Fig. 25.1 offers a potentially self-sustaining model for researching and developing context-specific teacher expertise. The first row shows how teacher research (TR) projects (e.g. EAR, lesson study, exploratory practice) can contribute to a local (e.g. national, district, etc.) database of findings, the more robust of which (i.e. those found most frequently) can provide the primary building block of the desired outcome: context-specific expertise.

Alongside these TR projects, teacher expertise case studies, as described above, can contribute to building an expertise “prototype” (Sternberg & Horvath, 1995), which would also feed into our understanding of context-specific expertise. This prototype, alongside the findings of TR projects and other practices of interest (e.g. approaches documented as effective elsewhere), can also supply ideas/inspiration for future interventions (e.g. in action research projects), the findings of which would feed back further into the TR database.

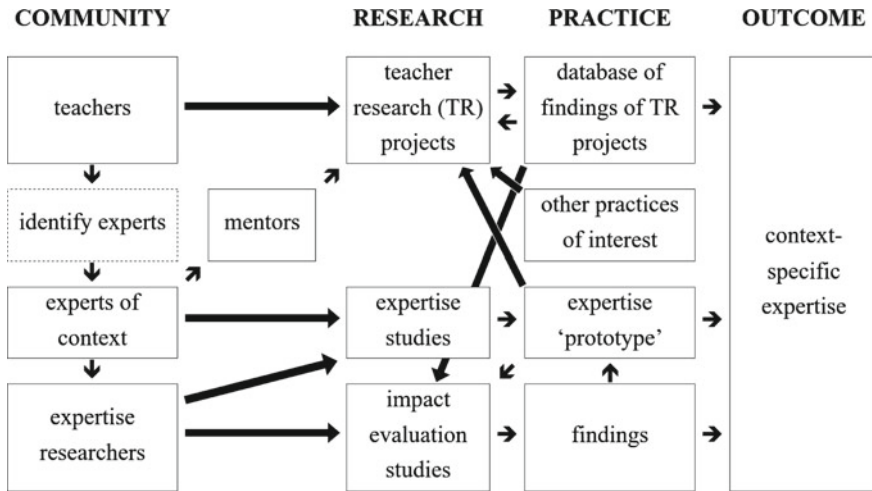


Fig. 25.1 A model for researching and developing context-specific expertise

Figure 25.1 also suggests a number of ways that experts of context, after themselves being identified for teacher expertise studies, may continue their own professional development while also strengthening the expertise-base within the model further. Firstly, those with prior experience of TR may become mentors for teachers who are new to TR, helping them to select appropriate research topics and methodology, conduct data analysis, and develop useful reflection skills (see Smith, 2020). By mentoring others, these experts would also develop their own understanding of research practice and effective teaching beyond their immediate contexts of practice. Where deemed appropriate, these experts of context could also go on to become formally qualified researchers of expertise (e.g. through PhD, EdD, MPhil and MA qualifications undertaken on sabbaticals from their normal duties). Such researchers would be well placed to examine the potential *impact* (defined appropriately for the context in question) of specific practices identified in either expertise studies or the TR database. This could take place through, for example, experimental studies on the learning impact of a specific teaching strategy, or meta-analyses and survey reviews of TR projects in a specific area (e.g. formative assessment, learner engagement). The findings of these could also feed back into the expertise prototype and, as such, would initiate a more empirical evidence base for the intended outcome of the model: context-specific teacher expertise.

This model, I should stress, is an *unimplemented vision*, a means to bring together systematically the different elements described above to offer a sustainable approach to building context-sensitive teacher expertise that is potentially implementable in low-income contexts in the Global South. In Bangladesh, for example, teacher action research is integrated into various teacher education programmes (see, e.g. Sarkar, Hedges, Griffiths, Mathew, & Biswas, 2017); this is the first building block of the model, upon which the proposed TR database could be built with comparatively

little additional funding. Teachers may even be asked to contribute their findings themselves through an online repository. Other elements could be added in sequential fashion, with ongoing monitoring, evaluation and adaptation of the model as it develops. If successful, it could be gradually increased in scale.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the challenges involved in developing teacher expertise locally, focusing particularly on lower-income contexts in the Global South and suggesting that both teacher-led research and larger-scale studies of expertise can contribute to the knowledge base from which understandings of appropriate good practice can emerge. It has provided an in-depth account of the methodological challenges and solutions adopted in one study of teacher expertise conducted by the author in India (Anderson, 2021), which I have argued was sufficiently robust, participatory and insightful in its findings, while also being replicable (in design) for other contexts around the world. Finally, I have offered one possible vision for how these various elements can contribute to building context-sensitive understandings of teacher expertise while also allowing for impact evaluation studies to ensure a sound evidence base for disseminating specific practices as this knowledge base increases; I argued that such a model could evolve gradually and with comparatively low levels of expenditure, making it potentially suited to contexts in the Global South where action research is already an established part of teacher education programmes.

Funding This research was supported by the Economic and Social Research Council (UK) under grant number ES/P000771/1.

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Chapter 26

The Professional, Pedagogical, and Personal Impacts of Being a Volunteer Teacher Trainer: Case Studies from Teachers Helping Teachers



Patrick Dougherty and Aya Shinozaki Dougherty

Abstract The impacts of teacher training and faculty development programs are often examined via the prism of their effects on audience members. We do not usually examine the impacts these programs have on the volunteers who serve as teacher trainers and faculty development presenters. This chapter examines the professional, pedagogical, and personal changes that take place in the lives of volunteer teacher trainers and faculty development presenters who have participated in one or more Teachers Helping Teachers (THT) programs. Utilizing data from an online survey of THT volunteers, responses from in-depth interviews of THT volunteers, and excerpts from online and written sources such as THT newsletters and reports from THT volunteers, this chapter reveals the impact that volunteering has on the lives of Teachers Helping Teachers volunteers. This chapter may inform those running teacher training programs of the scope and nature of change that can take place in volunteer teacher trainers'/presenters' lives in the three areas of enquiry. Examining the benefits of volunteering and what encourages people to volunteer will assist charitable and non-profit organizations to recruit volunteers and maintain them as part of the institution. It can also be informative for those considering volunteering for THT or similar programs.

Keywords Teacher training · Volunteering · Teacher trainer · Impacts · Benefits

Introduction

Teachers Helping Teachers (THT) is a special interest group of the Japan Association for Language Teaching (JALT). THT was formed in 2004 and, as its mission, aims to assist fellow educators in Southeast and Western Asia and the Subcontinent. Primarily working in Bangladesh, Vietnam, Laos, the Philippines, Nepal, and Kyrgyzstan, THT has put on approximately 50 teacher training programs since 2005, working with over

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8000 in-service and pre-service teachers and employing the efforts of approximately 100 volunteer teacher trainers and presenters in the process.

THT declares in its literature that it is dedicated to the aid and assistance of fellow educators and students in the developing nations of the Asia Pacific region. It fulfills this mission by providing teacher training workshops that "... exhibit practical, student and teacher-friendly approaches to English education that are informed by current research in the field" (Dougherty, 2005, p. 2). A report on a program put on in 2008 in Mindoro Oriental, the Philippines, described the methodology for a THT set of workshops, where volunteers make presentations and conduct workshops that "... mix theory with practice and keep the interests and needs of working teachers always in mind" (THT Website, 2020).

In 2008, with the interest of granting THT a stable footing and status from which to grow in the future, the organization joined with JALT as a Special Interest Group. This also allowed THT to obtain non-profit status in Japan. Below is a description of a typical THT conference program (Laurier & Morel, 2017 p. 44):

A typical THT trip involves Japan-based teachers volunteering their time to go to a selected country and making two or three presentations usually on teaching techniques that are appropriate for the audiences. These range from elementary teachers to university teachers, with various levels of training and expertise. The one thing they all have in common is a desire to learn more about teaching.... Occasionally there are opportunities for volunteer teachers to observe classes and even teach a class or two. Volunteers normally pay for their travel and lodging while visiting the countries.

The authors were among the founding members of the organization, and, for two years one of them was the coordinator of THT. The authors were continually involved in volunteer recruitment; hence, identifying the benefits of volunteering also identifies reasons *for* volunteering that can be offered to potential volunteers and, it is speculated, increases the chances of individuals offering to volunteer.

The chapter will be comprised of the results of an anonymous, open call, online survey of THT volunteers bolstered by separate in-depth interviews of additional volunteers. For the interviewees, efforts were made to find individuals from three categories of experience: newer to teaching, those who were mid-career, and those who were senior in the profession. Interviewees were expected to have volunteered in three or more THT programs. The research leading to this chapter focused on the impact of volunteering in three areas of each volunteer's life: professional, pedagogical, and personal.

Literature Review

Colleges, schools, communities, charitable organizations, all require the services of volunteers to maintain operations. According to (Mowen & Sujana, 2005; Wilson, 2000) volunteering is defined as offering services or support without receiving any monetary or in-kind compensation. The work is done, typically, for the benefit of an organization or group. According to Widjaja (2010, p. 6), volunteering involves,

“...voluntary, ongoing, planned, helping behavior that increases the well-being of strangers, offers no monetary compensation, and typically occurs within an organizational context.” Further, there are usually both intrinsic and extrinsic benefits associated with volunteering (Widjaja, 2010). It has been identified that volunteers have better physical and mental health than those individuals who do not volunteer (McDougle, Handy, Konrath, & Walk 2014). Volunteers also have better senses of self-esteem (Thoits & Hewitt, 2001) and they possess greater senses of happiness (Borgonovi, 2008). Indeed, according to Yeung, Zhang and Kim (2018) the generally positive outcomes of volunteering have been identified by numerous researchers. A study by Konrath, Fuhrel-Forbis, Lou, and Brown (2012) demonstrated the correlation between social interactions such as volunteering and its positive impact on the health of volunteers. Interestingly, the study also argued that these positive benefits only accrued if the purpose of volunteering was altruistic.

We know that the benefits of volunteering vary, but maybe generally categorized as being intrinsic or extrinsic in nature (Clary & Snyder, 1999). Intrinsic benefits are sourced from feelings of happiness or satisfaction that derive from the act of volunteering, and extrinsic benefits are accrued via the act of volunteering but exert an effect on the volunteer’s life externally. Intrinsic benefits might be understood as being altruistic, and extrinsic benefits might be understood to be material benefits (Bekkers, Ingen, de Wit & van Groenou, 2016). For example, this external benefit could be measured in how it helps the volunteer to succeed at obtaining employment or advancement in his or her profession.

Akhtar (2017) in a study of volunteer teacher trainers working in remote regions of Indonesia, found five areas in which volunteering benefited those who volunteered. According to him, these were to increase the knowledge base of the volunteers, to increase their skills, to give them a sense of satisfaction and purpose, to increase their scope and swath of their social relations, and increase their sense of positivity.

Methods

This was a triangulated investigation that utilized data from an online survey of THT volunteers, responses from in-depth interviews conducted with THT volunteers, and excerpts from online and written sources, such as the THT newsletter. The survey responses were anonymous and the respondents were invited to complete the survey via an open call sent out to a mailing list of THT volunteers. There were fifteen anonymous respondents to the online survey.

In respect to the interviews, they were conducted via an online real-time digital format and were recorded, and key pieces were transcribed. The same set of questions were asked to each of the subjects who were interviewed. The interviewees were directly recruited via personal or professional connections with the authors. Efforts were made to invite interviewees who were at different stages of their careers, from different global regions, and with variations in teaching areas. The findings and discussion are leavened by the authors’ own experiences as THT volunteers and

recruiters. It should be noted that the online survey is historical, the data having been collected in 2009 for a proceedings report (Dougherty, 2009a). In preparation for this chapter, it was felt that the results from this earlier study would apply well to the topic at hand and offer a range of perspectives from both the first decade of THT and its second.

Participants

The online survey had fifteen anonymous respondents. In addition, five THT volunteers agreed to sit for in-depth interviews. The interviews were conducted live, via an online format, and they were recorded and transcribed. Of the interviewees, two were female and three were male. Two of the interviewees were in their final years before retirement, two were mid-career, and one was in the middle of his first decade of teaching full-time. Additionally, the interviewees were originally from the following countries: Japan, Argentina, the United States, and New Zealand. For the sake of clarity, it should be noted that those who replied to the online survey will be referred to as “respondents” and those who volunteered to be one of the five subjects who sat for the interview will be referred to as “interviewee(s)”. Additionally, as the online survey was conducted anonymously, the authors are unsure of whether there is any overlap between the respondents to the online survey and the interviewees.

Findings and Discussion

The first section, “Background,” will detail survey and interviewee backgrounds in regard to how they came to find out about THT and how they were initially compelled to join a THT program, and what encouraged them to continue their association with THT and continue to participate in THT programs.

Background

One of the online survey questions asked participants to explain how they heard about THT. Five of the respondents were introduced to THT at conferences in Japan, three through coworkers or work associates, and the final seven via meeting or knowing Prof. William Balsamo, the founder of the THT. One volunteer explained that she attended her first program with a “colleague and dear friend” who was making her second trip to Bangladesh with THT at the time (Brown, 2009). From the interviews we learned that one respondent had learned about THT from a colleague of hers, she further explained that she was interested, at the time, in conducting workshops in developing countries within Southeast Asia. According to her, she had had some

experience in the past working in Cambodia and Thailand. Her colleague invited her to attend a THT Annual General Meeting at a JALT conference in 2008. She later met a colleague at an academic conference in Cambodia and ended up having lunch with a THT volunteer. When she learned of the volunteer's connection to THT, she said that she "grilled" him about the organization, wanting to hear about it from a volunteer's perspective. She explained that she was interested enough to join the next THT program in Bangladesh which was held in 2009.

Another online survey question asked the respondents to offer insight into what initially attracted them to THT. Responses were diverse, but the leitmotif of sharing came up in many of the replies. The respondents explained that for them, the attraction to THT came from the chance to share ideas and materials with educators in other countries who might, due to their circumstances, not be able to attend international, or even national, teacher development conferences. They felt that THT seminars might offer a good opportunity for them to further develop as educators. Two other survey respondents mentioned that they harbored an interest in teacher training.

One leitmotif came up in six other answers, the lure of travel. This was associated, some indicated, with the idea of traveling not just to travel but, as two respondents and two interviewees explained, to "travel with purpose," and to travel and "not be a tourist." This theme was continued by one of the interviewees:

... when I first came to Japan, I had been looking for an organization that I could align myself with that was involved in teacher development in developing countries. I had an interest prior to joining THT and I was pleasantly surprised to have found THT. And, why? Because I had had such positive experiences working with teachers in both Thailand and Cambodia, but particularly my experiences in Cambodia where I met individuals who were thrust into becoming village teachers due to the fact that they might have been the only person who had finished high school and they had no formal teacher training. I also thought of it as an opportunity to share from my years of teaching experience. I also felt that teaching teachers has a greater impact, in a way than teaching students because teachers go away to their various settings and they can influence other teachers as well as the students.

Regarding their initial decision to join a THT program, another question in the online survey asked respondents to ponder what "compelled" them to become a member of THT. Three of the respondents pointed out that their friendship with the leader of THT, or one of the THT officers, inclined them to join, and one responded that he or she wanted to travel to one of the host countries in a way that provided more than the regular tourist experience. Two respondents suggested that they felt motivated to help teachers in developing countries. Of the two, one explained, "*I had been looking for an opportunity to help teachers in developing countries, but also the presentation in which several past THT volunteers told about their experiences made it seem really interesting and worthwhile.*" The other responded that "The possibility of organizing workshops where we can have more extensive and intensive interaction than what we can have in one-way presentations given at conferences where interaction is more limited."

One of the interviewees, when asked about what compelled her to join subsequent THT programs, stated that she found the THT experience, "... *tremendously satisfying*." As she explained, she enjoyed meeting fellow educators and their students and seeing the situations in which they worked and learned. As she put it,

I just really enjoyed it. I felt I had done something useful. I learned a lot about what was happening in education in these other contexts. Plus, it was exciting to travel to these places and see things first hand and, from my point of view as an educator and not as a tourist.

This complements the answers of thirteen of the online survey respondents where they commented that they were moved to join another THT program by the enthusiasm of the audiences and the positive response they received from participants being primary reasons that they decided to join additional THT programs. This was summed up by one respondent:

My first THT experience was in Bangladesh in March 2006. I met warm people, (and) a large hard-working audience that made me feel that they appreciated what I had prepared, and encouraging and supportive THT volunteers. After a few minutes of my first workshop, I concluded that it was really worth spending time and effort to prepare all this material. Actually, I did not think what or why, I simply decided that I wanted to go on participating in THT seminars. (Dougherty, 2009a, p. 74)

In the following sections, the professional, pedagogical, and personal impacts of experiencing being a THT volunteer workshop facilitator and presenter are examined. As explained, responses from the online survey, the interviewees, and THT resources are utilized and blended as appropriate.

Professional Impacts

One survey respondent chose to focus on the benefits the volunteer experience had on the wider community. In other words, how the THT volunteers could benefit society. As he stated,

Ideas and information flow to a wider group. Teachers in host countries ... are able to learn and share useful information with their own colleagues. A wider dialog can be created. (Dougherty, 2009a, p. 76)

One interviewee felt volunteering allowed her to establish what she called "*really great connections*" with teachers in other parts of the world. She felt that she had increased her knowledge of how English is taught and grown to understand the challenges that people are facing. According to her, she also "honed" her writing and presentation skills by working with THT. Another interviewee mentioned that she felt that when she was not making presentations at her THT workshops as much as proposing a topic and then working together with the attendees as part of a professional dialog. She felt like she was truly a member of a community of practice. Additionally, one of the survey respondents mentioned that the chance to add academic

presentations or journal articles to his curriculum vitae (THT has an annual academic journal) was beneficial to his professional advancement.

One of the online survey questions specifically asked participants whether the THT volunteer experience benefited them at work. Three-fourths of the respondents said that there were direct benefits for them in their professional sphere. A few indicated that their academic departments were supportive of their volunteer work, and two respondents stated that they felt that their experiences, and documents that they received, such as a letter of recommendation, or citations for their resumes, influenced their hiring committees at their current or past employment. One of the interviewees stated that one of her professional benefits was that she learned how to develop effective workshops. She had only given presentations at conferences in the past and the THT programs offered her a chance to develop interactive workshops. She also said that her work with THT, where she attended and presented workshops in Vietnam, Laos, the Philippines, and Bangladesh was that it was mentioned by the vice-director of her institute at her current university as a contributing factor for her receiving tenure. According to her, “... *he told me that he was particularly interested in the THT project for the links that it created: teachers from several countries in Japan working together with teachers in other countries, and in my particular case, a teacher of Spanish, representing this university, working with and learning from teachers of English.*”

Additionally, networking was listed as an extrinsic benefit by some of the respondents. In four cases, THT volunteers were invited back as scholars-in-residence or researchers in the country, or with the institutions, where a THT program was held. Another volunteer explained how witnessing how the officers of THT organized the seminars gave her ideas on how she could better construct and organize her own conferences and events as an officer of a Spanish language teachers association.

On the practical level, the experience gave one respondent, “... *a chance to extend my professional skills and to learn from a wide range of other teachers that I would otherwise never meet.*” One other respondent mentioned that she felt that her knowledge and expertise reached further through THT activities. Instead of reaching only one class of students, she explained, you might, indeed, be influencing many more students via those in-service or pre-service teachers attending your workshops.

Pedagogical Impacts

One respondent focused on renewing his appreciation for his own work environment, as he stated (Dougherty, 2009a, p. 75), “... *seeing the conditions of other teachers made me appreciate my own situation more (a mere 40 students in a class is nothing!!).*” One of the interviewees stated that she learned from the participants in her workshops and from other presenters. She also learned from her own mistakes during the course of her workshops and was able to return to her regular teaching job and reflect on what she learned from the experience and apply these lessons to her own teaching. A survey respondent stated that the experience of volunteering was

worthwhile because, as he explained, he saw himself not as a visiting expert, but as a fellow educator, one who could serve, as he said, as a “mirror” for the teachers in the audience that would allow them to develop their own solutions and ideas and from which he, the THT volunteer, could learn. As he implied, teachers working in difficult circumstances can, indeed, not only inspire a visiting workshop facilitator, but offer ideas that the facilitator may use in his own classes. This respondent explained that volunteering for a THT program would be “... *the best investment you could ever make.*” One of the interviewees explained that she had become more aware of the practical implications of what she was doing in her own classroom and how this might or might not apply to classrooms in other settings and in other countries. As she explained:

I think I have become much more careful in how I stage lessons. ...for the last three years, I have worked on this project to create a bank of teaching materials for teachers in Bangladesh. That has had a profound impact on my professional life. But, also pedagogically because I am trying things out in the classroom first, experimenting, to see if they work or not before recommending them to others.

One interviewee went on to explain that she had “... *increased [her] knowledge of how English is taught and the challenges people are facing.*” Another interviewee mentioned that the experience of working with teachers in developing countries had an interesting impact on his own view of his teaching situation. It made him appreciate what he had available to him as a teacher in Japan. As he put it, “*It made me take stock of what I have and how lucky I am to be teaching where I am.*” Another interviewee stated that he saw himself grow as an educator. He explained that, during the question and answer sections of his workshops, he received questions that forced him to really think about his teaching and also figure out ways to help teachers whom, he said, would often be faced with classes that had over one hundred students and a minimum of technology to assist in the instruction. He said they wanted to figure out how to make such classes communicative. This made him think deeply about the teaching and learning process, which, he concluded, improved his own performance as a teacher.

One of the respondents mentioned that the THT experience had allowed her to learn from the workshops and presentations made by other volunteers. This gave her ideas that she has been able to apply to teaching her Spanish courses. This mirrored the comment of another volunteer who offered that he had “... *been able to use some of what I have learned from my THT colleagues.*”

Finally, one respondent mentioned that she was a teacher trainer in Japan and that she gained a great deal from hearing of the manner and techniques teachers use in other countries to deal with challenging teaching and learning situations. She felt that this information was something that she could bring back to her own classes and workshops in Japan to share with her students.

Personal Impacts

A question in the online survey asked respondents to reflect on the intrinsic benefits of the THT volunteer experience. One of the respondents mentioned the sense of being valued as a professional was important to him. Another respondent mentioned how the chance to reflect on her own personal situation in Japan in light of the difficulties experienced by the teachers in the host countries was an important “eye-opener.” One respondent went into detail:

It is much more rewarding to present at THT than at a regular conference because of the participants’ eagerness to learn and gain new expertise.... Also, it was my first visit to a developing country and I gained the confidence that I can survive and teach outside of my comfort zone. (Dougherty, 2009a, p. 75)

Another volunteer, interviewed for a separate article on the Bangladesh THT program explained that he felt that the teachers he worked with in Bangladesh were some of the most eager and lively he had worked with (Dougherty, 2009b). One of the interviewees mentioned that she felt that a major intrinsic benefit was that she had developed really good friendships via her work with THT. She added that she, “*really valued my involvement with THT.*” She explained that she appreciated the people she met and felt like she had had the chance to share things she learned across the years with people who were, “*99.9% appreciative.*” Another interviewee, contemplating another benefit, mentioned, “*...you can give something back to the professional community.*” Many of the respondents mirrored this view in their comments, with nine of them specifically stating that having the chance to give back to the profession or society was greatly satisfying.

Most survey respondents mentioned the opportunity to travel in an in-depth manner, being “... shown around a new place by nice people... visiting the homes of local people....,” or the chance to “experience a culture first hand” as some of the benefits of volunteering for a THT program. One of the interviewees mention almost the same point, stating that his involvement in THT gave him, “A chance to experience new countries but not just as a tourist” and that you “... can pack a lot of learning about the culture and country into a short time.” The tenth question of the online survey asked whether volunteering to present at a THT program benefited the respondents outside of work. Fourteen of the respondents said yes in a few or many words. One of the more succinct responses said simply, “It [has] given me a sense of fulfillment.” Another respondent explained that the experience gave her a greater understanding of the needs and aspirations of a wider range of people, as she explained,

I think I understand a little more about the world as it is today. I have a wider circle of friends and acquaintances, and I feel I am spending my time and using my skills in a way that brings some benefit to other people. My training and experience is not being used solely for enhancing my own career or maintaining my own lifestyle, or just the betterment of my own small group of students. By having input into the professional life of fellow teachers, I have the chance, through them, to contribute (hopefully positively) to the lives of a greater number of people. (Dougherty, 2009a, p. 77)

Another question in the online survey queried if the respondents had maintained contact, post-program, with the conference attendees or hosts. Fourteen said yes, with the majority of them explaining that they had done so via e-mail, Face book entries, and three of the respondents said that they had made additional, non-THT visits to the host countries either as tourists or as guest lecturers. One of the interviewees stated that she had established “really great” connections with teachers in other parts of the world. The final question of the online survey offered the respondents a chance to offer additional comments on the benefits of volunteering for a THT program. One of the comments focused on the fact that not only does a volunteer offer knowledge from his or her own involvement in the classroom, but the volunteer also gains understanding from the experiences of others.

Another interviewee stated that he felt he received far more from the experience than he felt he probably gave; according to him, “*The feeling of love, appreciation, interest; these things filled me and made me feel really good – I did not expect that.*” One survey respondent said that the experience of being a volunteer helped him remember that it is not about “you,” it is about “them.” Finally, a respondent, in reply to the question regarding the intrinsic benefits of the THT volunteer experience, stated that for him, the benefits were, “*Professional development, friendship, community, learning, moments of pure joy.*”

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the impacts of being a THT volunteer in three areas of THT volunteers’ lives: professional, pedagogical, and personal. What has been found is that there is a swath of benefits accrued in each category. For the professional impact of volunteering as a THT faculty development facilitator or presenter, the data points to extrinsic benefits that include increasing the possibilities for cross-cultural understanding and peaceful existence, allowing the volunteers to expand their circle of professional connections, and assisting them with achieving career goals of employment or advancement. Pedagogical impacts included having the opportunity to weigh one’s own teaching context against potentially more challenging contexts in other countries. Additionally, volunteers felt that they had learned from both other THT volunteers and from program attendees. Volunteers were able to receive information about new teaching techniques or methodologies that they were able to apply to their own teaching. Further, the experience of volunteering as a THT workshop facilitator or presenter encouraged volunteers to give more thought to their own lesson planning and preparation, and it encouraged them to be more careful in staging and scaffolding their lessons. Regarding the personal impacts of being a THT volunteer, respondents and interviewees identified the opportunities to travel as something other than a tourist, the chance to meet locals in unique settings, and the chance to expand their own world views as some of the personal benefits of being a THT volunteer.

That these results were consistent over the course of more than a decade is significant in that this indicates the reliability of the findings. Across the history of the organization, THT volunteers found benefit in their service, profiting both intrinsically and extrinsically from serving as a THT workshop facilitator or presenter. The results of this study have myriad uses, but the authors feel that the key uses benefit both the individual and the organization. These results may provide those interested in volunteering, and certainly those who are keen to convince others to volunteer, grist for the mill for their arguments in favor of service. Additionally, it is sincerely hoped that the results offered will be useful for those tasked with creating, maintaining, or expanding similar teacher training programs in the future. It is a simple truth that without attracting and maintaining an enthusiastic pool of volunteers, organizations like Teachers Helping Teachers would not be able to exist.

Appendix A: Online Survey Questions

1. How many THT programs have you participated in, and in which countries?
2. How did you hear about THT?
3. What attracted you to THT?
4. What propelled you to join your first THT program?
5. If you have been involved in two or more THT programs, what was it about the first experience that made you want to join another program?
6. For you, what are the intrinsic benefits of the THT volunteer experience?
7. For you, what are the extrinsic benefits of the THT volunteer experience?
8. If you were encouraging a friend or colleague to join a THT sponsored program in any country we are involved in, what would you say?
9. Has volunteering to present at a THT program benefited you at work? If so, how has it done so?
10. Has volunteering to present at a THT program benefited you outside of work? If so, how has it done so?
11. Have you maintained contact with our hosts, or host country attendees, after completing a THT program? If so, how have you done so (later visits, exchanges, emails, social media, etc.)?
12. Have you submitted an article, or articles, for the *THT Journal*?
13. Do you have anything else to add in response to this survey concerning the benefits of volunteering for a THT program?

Appendix B: Interview Questions

1. How did you first hear about Teachers Helping Teachers (THT)?
2. What attracted you about the Teachers Helping Teachers enough to agree to volunteer?

3. At which THT programs did you volunteer to present?
4. Generally, after experiencing your first THT program, what encouraged you to continue volunteering?
5. In these three categories, what changes have taken place in your life due to your work as a THT volunteer?
 - Professional
 - Pedagogical
 - Personal
6. Are there other benefits to being a THT volunteer?
7. Are there any drawbacks to being a THT volunteer?
8. Do you have any additional comments about your experience as a THT volunteer?

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Chapter 27

English Language Teacher Education Amid Policy Changes in Multilingual Indonesia



Fuad Abdul Hamied

Abstract Indonesia, an archipelago with more than a quarter of a billion people speaking more than 700 languages, has to face a multitude of educational problems, especially when language education is the issue. Regarding English at school, increased preference for the national language, as indicated in the Language Law and other related government regulations, has contributed to the waning of the position of English, especially at the primary education level. Consequently, pre-service and in-service English language teacher education (henceforth ELTE) provisions, particularly the current levels of teachers' competencies and upcoming global challenges faced by the current school goers have come under scrutiny. This chapter, therefore, re-examines the current language policies and educational rules and regulations of the country by looking into the ways the policymakers have responded to such challenges as global competitiveness, teacher professionalism, and quality teacher education. It also discusses a number of factors that impact teacher education which include teacher competencies, use of the Indonesian language, curriculum changes, and assessment washback.

Keywords English proficiency · Global competition · Language policy · Teacher competency · Teacher education

Introduction

Indonesia, the world's fourth most populous country and third-largest democracy, is certainly expected to play a significant role in international transactions. The country has indicated its strong potential in the region, as "the archipelago of over 18,000 islands is home to more than a quarter of a billion people, the economy of which is the biggest in Southeast Asia and has been enjoying strong GDP growth of between 5.0 and 6.5 percent for over a decade" (Clark, 2014, p. 1). With such demographic and financial capital, Indonesia has become a competitive country and

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is of strategic importance to its regional neighbors as well as to global partners in the West. Given its role and status in global transactions, the country has to make “English a must to learn by a good portion of the country’s citizens in order to become effective communicators in the increasingly competitive global environment of the twenty-first century” (Hamied & Lengkanawati, 2018, p. 55).

Since teachers play a crucial role in the teaching of English, English language teacher education (ELTE), particularly its effectiveness in improving English language teaching, which could contribute significantly to the country’s competitiveness in the global arena, naturally comes under the spotlight. In the Indonesian context, ELTE has to take into account the linguistic and cultural complexity of the country, with more than 700 living languages spoken by users from hundreds of ethnicities throughout the archipelago. Different efforts made in improving ELTE include policies developed at the national levels and practical guidelines put forward by different authorities from the ministerial offices going down to regional governmental levels and schooling institutions.

As the role of teachers in education is crucial, English language teacher quality needs to be prioritized. However, most teachers tend to be left behind in terms of familiarity with the twenty-first-century skills such as digital literacy skills (Soepriyanti, Waluyo, Sujana & Fitriana, 2022). These skills are critical especially among language teachers, as these skills could assist the teachers in accessing new developments in ELT methods and classroom techniques, as well as in selecting and downloading relevant, authentic teaching materials. About today’s school, the outspoken critic and educational philanthropist Bill Gates (as cited in Pletka, 2007, p. 13) has made the following prophetic comment: “training the workforce of tomorrow with today’s high schools is like trying to teach kids about today’s computers on a 50-year-old mainframe.” Although the use of technologies in our schools has been widespread, except in remote areas, greater integration of technology to enhance the students’ learning is needed, and it should be blended with other tools, as suggested by Global Education Census (2018), so that it will help the students to better compete in their future global market.

The above observation of Bill Gates is as relevant to the school context as it is to the teacher education institutions. Changes have taken place at unprecedented rates around our educational institutions. And when teachers and especially the teachers’ teachers are sluggish and resistant to change, the classroom setting would become dull and empty, as our students both at school and in college belong to the NetGeneration.

In response to the pressing needs of the twenty-first century, the Indonesian policymakers have stipulated that “as a professional educator, a teacher has to carry out a set of main tasks of educating, teaching, guiding, directing, training, assessing, and evaluating students,” and to accomplish all these assignments, “a teacher will be in need of expertise, skills, and competencies in line with set norms and standards and will have to take professional education as well” (UU-RI-No.14, 2005, Verse 1). Teaching certificates, meant to be representing fulfillment of the requirements for attaining the twenty-first-century skills, are awarded to teachers as outlined in the Teacher Law as well as in other ministerial regulations, including fulfillment of the academic qualification, i.e. a 4-year university degree, and successful completion of

the teacher competency tests which cover pedagogic and professional competencies, including pedagogic, personality, social, and professional competencies. Teacher certification is handled by an accredited teacher education institution, assigned by the government, and expected to be well managed in an objective, transparent, and accountable mechanism (UU-RI-No.14, 2005, Verses 8–11).

This chapter assesses present language policies within the country's educational laws and regulations, especially the law on language referred to as *UU-RI-No.14* in this chapter, examining how policymakers have responded to issues such as global competitiveness, teacher professionalism as indicated by the government regulation on teacher certification referred to as *UU-RI-No. 14* in this chapter, and high-quality teacher education. The importance of teacher skills, the use of the Indonesian language, curricular modifications, and assessment washback have all been highlighted as critical problems.

Challenges and Responses

The challenges that Indonesia is facing stems from its position in the global competitiveness which entails regional and local intricacies, such as the role of information and communication technology in education, the policies set up to respond to the challenges, and teacher quality that could trigger improvement of school graduates with readiness to compete on a par with their global counterparts. As regards English language education, the challenges relate to the use of technology in language teaching, language policies especially on foreign language teaching, and English teacher quality as reflected in teacher education, teacher certification, and teacher professional development.

Global Competitiveness Index 2017–2018 has placed Indonesia at rank 36, which is much better than that in 2016–2017, which was at 41, as can be seen in Table 27.1 below. This is still quite a challenge for the country to become more competitive in the near future, considering three ASEAN neighbors are still ahead of it: Singapore (rank 3), Malaysia (rank 23), and Thailand (rank 32). However, Schwab (2017, p. 12) has adopted quite an optimistic tone regarding Indonesia, when saying that "... emerging markets such as China, India, and Indonesia are becoming centers for innovation, catching up with advanced economies." He further underlines the importance of "...increasing the readiness of their people and firms to adopt new technology, which is necessary to widely spread innovation's potential economic and societal benefits" (Schwab, 2017, p. 12).

It seems that in almost all the country's development sectors, improving competitiveness tends to be technology-dependent. The people of the country are expected to be technology-literate, and since English has been the most dominant language used in virtual communication, being literate in English is indeed strategic for global competition. The strategic development and use of ICT in education in Indonesia are quite promising as it is supported by the presidential decree at the National ICT

Table 27.1 Global Competitiveness Index 2017–2018 rankings and 2016–2017 comparisons

Economy	GCI 2017–2018		GCI 2016–2017	
	Rank (out of 137)	Score (1–7)	Rank (out of 138)	Score (1–7)
Switzerland	1	5.86	1	5.81
United States	2	5.85	3	5.70
Singapore	3	5.71	2	5.72
Netherlands	4	5.66	4	5.57
...	5–22			
Malaysia	23	5.17	25	5.16
...1	24–31			
Thailand	32	4.72	34	4.64
Chile	33	4.71	33	4.64
Spain	34	4.70	32	4.68
Azerbaijan	35	4.69	37	4.55
Indonesia	36	4.68	41	4.52
Malta	37	4.65	40	4.52
Russian Federation	38	4.64	43	4.51
	39–137			

Note Adapted from Schwab (2017, p. 13)

Council and also by a presidential regulation on national education networks and Internet for senior high schools.

Educational policies are inherently covered in governmental laws and regulations, so are policies regarding ELTE. In the Indonesian context, policies on language teaching cannot be treated without taking into account the status of the Indonesian language as “the national official language used in the entire territory of the Republic of Indonesia” (UU-RI-No. 24, 2009: Verse 1), which serves as a “medium of instruction, ..., as well as a means of development and use of science, technology, art, and language of the mass media” (UU-RI-No. 24, 2009: Verse 25). The linguistic and cultural complexity, plus the history of hundreds of years of non-English speaking country’s colonization of the country, has caused perplexity in the teaching of languages.

Research on ELT in Indonesia has suggested that policies in ELTE need to focus more on language teaching skills and language knowledge. Sulistiyo (2015), who did research in a teacher education institution, involving its graduates and also beginner teachers, argues that teacher education has to equip graduates with adequate levels of pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) as well as improve new teachers’ teaching skills to help them become fully competent professional teachers of English. The blending of pedagogy and subject content knowledge should certainly become the core of teacher education. Using data collected from teachers, teacher

educators, members of educational board, school principals, and educational consultants through semi-structured interviews and classroom observations, Zein (2012) explored the needs of primary teachers of English in terms of knowledge and skills. He suggests that a bottom-up approach be taken in teacher education policymaking, in both the formulation and enactment of the policy. Zein (2012) also recommends that a consortium on primary school English teaching be established “to play indispensable roles in the generation of reliable and comprehensive data on teachers’ needs and potential to contribute to the creation of teacher education programs that well attend to the needs of the teachers” (pp. 315–316).

Teacher quality has been prioritized by policymakers in educational planning and development in Indonesia. The teaching troop that the government has to manage is quite huge. The 2010 statistics, which seems to be still true at present, show that the proportion of English teachers is 4.4% of the total teaching force in the country. At that time, the total number of English teachers was 122,588, out of 2,783,321 teachers in all the schooling layers (Hamied, 2011). The policymakers’ understanding of the importance of teacher quality has been indicated by the priority given to training and certification of teachers as well as to better management regarding the size and distribution of the teaching force. As to teacher quality in instructional delivery, reform of the curriculum and improvement in teaching methods have also been carried out. The overall strategy devised by the Indonesian government in raising the quality of teachers has been clearly shown in the budget allocation for various different measures in the education sector at the national level. Most of the government’s increased education budget has gone toward hiring more teachers, especially at the elementary level, and increasing teacher pay, notably through the implementation of a new certification procedure (Tobias, Wales, Syamsulhakim & Suharti, 2014).

As mentioned above, English proficiency of English teachers, a key determinant in the students’ achieving expected learning outcomes, is still inadequate in Indonesia, as indicated by their own levels of proficiency as well as their students’ English proficiency attainment. During 2007 and 2008, Hamied (2011) used international standards to assess more than 27,000 teachers and school administrators in more than 500 schools with were assessed. The results have given rise to serious concerns as only a little more than 5% of them were categorized as having the basic working proficiency level and above, a level expected of the teachers in order to assist their students in reaching the intermediate level—the level expected of secondary school graduates. The level of proficiency of teachers of English across the board taking TOEIC was at the intermediate level, as indicated by the score of only 518 on the test, with those in Java scoring on average 563, which was still at the intermediate level. With regard to high school students’ English proficiency, out of more than 220,000 senior high school students enrolled in both general and vocational high schools, more than 90% fell into novice and elementary levels, and thus failing to reach the expected intermediate level. The TOEIC test puts testees into 6 categories: novice (≤ 245), elementary (250–395), intermediate (400–595), basic working proficiency (600–795), advanced working proficiency (800–895), and general working proficiency (>900) (Hamied, 2011).

The efforts to nurture professionalism of teachers have not been widely welcomed, even by the teachers themselves. When the policy on certification was first introduced with competency testing as its filtering mechanism, strong opposition came from teachers' associations. The opponents of competency testing sought support from members of the Legislative Assembly, and they succeeded in gaining parliamentary approval not to use competency testing. Instead, portfolio-based assessment favored by teachers was adopted for certification.

Professional development, in the 2005 Teacher Law (UU-RI-No.14), is focused on mastery of the subject matter to be taught.

With the development of English as an international language, schools in Indonesia need more qualified teachers to improve the quality of English subject and eventually the quality of the schools. Teachers of English have more burdens on their shoulders to improve the students' competence in communication and at the same time, enable them to succeed in the National Exams. (Anugerahwati & Saukah, 2010, pp. 47–48)

The teachers have to teach the students to use English, but they must also teach how to work on the test to ensure that their students are successful in the national exams. That is what causes them a problem. The two aims can seldom be reached with the same degree of mastery.

The government's improvement of teacher competencies has become an important focal measure taken by the government, including introduction of new approaches and methods to the implementation of the curriculum in Indonesian schools. In the teaching of English, the systemic functional linguistic genre pedagogy (henceforth SFL-GP) has been officially adopted in the English curriculum since 2004 when the curriculum was declared effective by the government. The SFL-GP was inspired by the Australian genre pedagogy, which was developed from a theory of how speakers use language in social life (a functional theory of language) and specifically out of the systemic functional linguistic (SFL) theory (Emilia & Hamied, 2015).

The introduction of SFL-GP to the teaching of English is a response to the need of developing critical thinking ability, an important twenty-first-century skill among the language learners. Measures with respect to the school curriculum change have been reacted to by various educational stakeholders. A legal question with respect to who should develop the curriculum has not been properly resolved yet. Policy-wise, in the Indonesian setting, evaluating and updating the school curriculum are primarily the duty of the Ministry of Education, despite the fact that the 2003 Education Law stipulates that the curriculum should really be produced at the school level (Hamied, 2014). Measures taken by the government have been responded to by experts, teachers, as well as administrators. Identified responses include issues in teacher education outcomes, areas of teacher competencies, top-down policy regarding the curriculum, the vicious cyclical circle of quality education improvement, and clarity of teacher education handling. Policy analysts in teacher education would tend to say that any teacher education policy adopted should be outcome-oriented (Darling-Hammond, 2006).

Another response has been addressed to the 2013 school curriculum, considered as a force-fed type of curriculum. Different reactions have been made by teachers

at school to the implementation of the new curriculum. Some still argued that it was a type of curriculum developed in a top-down and centralistic fashion. Schools belonging to the pilot project for the implementation of the 2013 curriculum had no other option but to implement it as outlined by the Ministry. The atmosphere within these pilot project schools was still uncertain. Many teachers in these schools had different perspectives regarding the new curriculum. The majority of the teachers thought that the new curriculum had made them even more overburdensome than earlier despite the fact that they were free from the tasks of preparing the syllabuses and teaching materials in that the curriculum materials had been then made available by the Ministry (Hamied, 2014).

Critical Issues

Issues and concerns regarding English teacher education in the Indonesian context could be encapsulated in six interrelated phenomena: teacher competency improvement with teacher education reappraisal as its consequence, use of the Indonesian language as a medium of instruction with related language policies in education as a whole, and curriculum changes with all implementational complexities.

Teacher Competencies and Teacher Education

Improvement of teacher competencies is not as easy as improvement of the teachers' welfare. When teacher competency testing was introduced, several teachers' associations vigorously opposed competency testing and obtained a parliamentary majority against the use of the competency test as a prerequisite for certification (Juminto, 2015). For this reason, when the reforms were first implemented in 2007, the initial cohorts of teachers received certifications based on an assessment of a portfolio of their past experience and training or by passing a 90-h training course. It is good to know that currently the *Uji Kompetensi Guru* (UKG), which is a test of teacher competency, specifically on pedagogic and professional domains, has been fully administered to all teachers in Indonesian schools. The scores gained by teachers with 4-year university degrees and by teachers without the 4-year degrees are not significantly different in almost all layers of schooling. Tobias et al. (2014) point out:

existing data show that teachers with a university degree do not perform significantly better in tests on subject matter than those without, suggesting that a university degree alone may not be an adequate criterion for selecting high-quality teachers at least at the level of basic education. (p. 22)

Teacher education is commonly expected to provide students with pedagogical knowledge and real-life experience in teaching, which could then equip student-teachers with such skills as organizing classroom activities, creating student-level-based tasks and activities, providing feedback and doing error correction, selecting appropriate materials, and handling students with different learning styles and strategies. In accomplishing all these tasks, the English teacher's proficiency is indeed instrumental, both as a model for the students and as a tool to smoothen the flow of teaching-learning activities (Renandya, Hamied & Nurkamto, 2018).

Financial motivation to perform better does not automatically bring about expected results, especially when monitoring mechanism is not laid out in such a way that the mechanism is practically easy to implement. Of critical importance is questions such as what specific aspects to assess and who should administer the assessment, and what "sticks and carrots" actions could encourage teachers to keep improving their professional performance. As Tobias et al. (2014) point out,

[e]vidence from recent evaluations of Indonesia's teacher certification program suggests that it is unlikely that salary increases alone will lead automatically to improvements in teachers' performance – there is a need for incentives to be closely linked to demonstrated competence. (p. 21)

Although introduction to student active learning has been around for decades, passive classroom atmosphere is still a common phenomenon. Marcellino (2008) has identified three causes to passive classroom situation:

First, the students' previous trainings do not expose this sort of interactive learning model to them. Second, their cultural values and beliefs somehow do not encourage them to challenge neither their teachers nor their classmates as it may somewhat indicate that they are showing off. Third, the survey shows that their command of English is relatively very poor. (p. 65)

With regard to Marcellino's second observation regarding cultural values and beliefs that could cause student passivity in class, with rampant access to information through technology, values could easily change and be changed. Values could be easily learnt across cultures. In this case, the teacher could play a significant role in facilitating his/her students' adoption of values from other cultures, which could contribute to the betterment of the teaching and learning process.

Another indicator of teacher quality is the results of the UKG. When administered in November 2015, it was taken by close to 3 million teachers, of which 123,136 were English teachers. This test was meant to assess pedagogical and professional competencies, with a minimum passing score of 55.00 for the 2015 administration, and to be increased to 80.00 in the year 2018. The results of the 2015 Teacher Competency Test for English teachers are shown in Table 27.2.

As can be seen in Table 27.2, the results are somewhat discouraging as only English teachers with the four-year university degree at junior and senior secondary schools, on the average, gained the minimum standard test score of >55.00. The number of English teachers taking the teacher competency test was 123,136, of whom only 69.79% met the minimum requirement for teacher certification, and the rest (30.21%) failed the test. Similar test results are found in the English proficiency test involving 224,143 senior high school students, of whom 94.49% fall into novice

Table 27.2 UKG results 2015: English teachers

	Junior secondary schools		Senior secondary schools		Vocational schools	
	<S1	S1	<S1	S1	<S1	S1
N	13,926	65,159	3888	20,779	4193	15,191
Mean	50.37	55.14	53.86	57.66	53.09	54.69
Max	97.78	100.00	99.44	100.00	97.46	100.00
Min	1.98	1.98	1.98	1.98	13.89	15.87

UKG = Uji Kompetensi Guru (teacher competency test)

S1 = university four-year degree (B.A degree), required for teacher certification

Source Ditjen-Guru-&-Tendik (2015)

and elementary categories, whereas the expected achievement of a senior high school graduate is the intermediate level (Hamied, 2011).

Professional development of teachers was stipulated in the 2005 Teacher Law (UU-RI-No.24), which includes pedagogical, personal, social, and professional competencies, to be fulfilled through teaching and administrative assignments as well as ranking and functional promotional requirement fulfillment. Supervision and development of teachers' professionalism are mostly carried out through a functional position, which refers to quality teaching activities as opposed to simply years of teaching experience. In the Indonesian career path, we are introduced to two strands, belonging to each individual teacher: rank and function. Rank is mostly determined by years of teaching experience, whereas function is determined by fulfillment of professional development requirements. Strategic policies for teacher professional and career guidance and development in an educational institution run by the central government, the local government, or by a private organization are stipulated further in the ministerial regulation (UU-RI-N0.14-2005, 2005).

Teacher education is offered at the tertiary level. It has been difficult to identify a shortcut in improving the quality of education. A vicious circle is then to be blame. A tertiary teacher education program fails to succeed due to poor entry behaviors of the student applicants to the program. Poor quality of senior secondary school outcome is among others due to incapable teachers, who have been granted teaching qualification by the tertiary teacher education program. The cyclical loop has been succinctly described by Jalal and Musthafa (2001) that "the quality of higher education in general will, in turn, depend on the quality of its intake, hence, how high school students are prepared and how they perform when entering tertiary learning school teachers and; therefore, the problem is how these teachers are prepared" (p. 210). Related to poor input to teacher, education programs are the issue of how much should be covered in the curriculum regarding the content area, teaching methods, and values. The debate on this issue has brought about two strands of implementing teacher education: concurrent and consecutive. In the concurrent mode, contents and teaching methods are offered within one teacher education program, whereas in the consecutive mode, contents are first acquired in one tertiary program, and then, teaching methods are taken in a teacher education program.

Use of Indonesian

As regards the use of the Indonesian language as a medium of instruction, the 2009 Law on Language (UU-RI-No. 24) stipulated that in any national education activity, the Indonesian language must be used as a medium of instruction. In addition, a foreign language can be used for the purpose of enhancing students' ability in the foreign language (UU-RI-No.24, 2009: Verse 29). These legal points have brought about contradictory, "rubber-like" interpretations. For example, the final project reports in the form of undergraduate papers, master's degree theses, and doctoral dissertations vary in terms of the language use, English or Indonesian, and differ from one university to another. Some would say that since the reports are official documents, they have to be written in the Indonesian language. Some others would say that since the writing of the final project reports could enhance the students' ability in using English, they should be written in English. As for literacy skills, our school children tend to be bilingual, and many are even plurilingual. The ability to read would be better enhanced by the use of the students' mother tongue, and we expect that language skills capacity could transfer from the mother tongue-based literacy to the second or foreign language acquisition. Benson (2016) has put this issue in a proper perspective when saying that the mother tongue-based literacy could involve

teaching initial literacy (reading and writing) in the L1, teaching an Lx as an additional language using appropriate methodology, gradually promoting transfer of literacy skills from L1 to Lx, and gradually moving from L1 as language of instruction (LOI) to using both L1 and Lx through bilingual methods. Transfer between languages means that reading skills only have to be taught once in life. (p. 5)

Curriculum Changes

Curriculum changes in Indonesia have taken place more than five times since the country's independence was declared in 1945. When the school curriculum is changed, the English curriculum has to change as well. New approaches emerge to indicate the change. Up to around 1968, English classroom activities were dominated by grammar-translation exercises. In early 1968, the audio-lingual approach was adopted and implemented in the classroom. In the 1975 curriculum, the audio-lingual approach was still adopted. In the 1984 curriculum, the communicative approach was adopted, and the 2004 curriculum still adopted the communicative approach, but a different label was given—a meaning-based curriculum. Named the competency-based curriculum, it expected classroom teaching–learning practices to adopt a genre-based approach. We realize that almost every 10-years we have to be introduced to a new curriculum. It has been nine years since we implemented the 2013 curriculum, adopting science-based, and holistic approaches to teaching–learning activities (Hamied, 2014). While the 2013 school curriculum was being implemented, debates kept taking place regarding English offered at the primary

school. Arguments from the opponents to offering English at the primary school underlined its detrimental effect on the acquisition of the national language, Indonesian. The proponents of the idea of teaching English at the primary school argue that “early exposure to English would better equip students with enhanced multilingual awareness that could itself promote their understanding of their own national language... foreign language teaching, if conducted in a professional fashion by trained teachers, will not cause any harm” (Hamied, 2012, p. 71).

Assessment Washback

English teachers in Indonesia, just like teachers of other subjects, are very much concerned with tests, especially high-stakes ones, like the national exams. They are aware and so are the students and their parents, that tests could serve as “gatekeepers to membership of valued social categories. Tests thus have the power to confer on a person a sense of being socially recognizable as acceptable or unacceptable, as belonging or not belonging” (McNamara, Khan & Frost, 2015, p. 11). However, the validity of the tests, especially the language tests, is often found to suffer. When accuracy is more favored than fluency, when grammaticality is prioritized over interactivity, then the validity of the test is in jeopardy. This has happened to teacher competency tests, when real-life classroom activity is not given a bigger share in teacher competency assessment. In language teaching as well as in assessment, holistic approaches need to be taken into consideration, as, for example, “people learned to read and write not by being taught skills and grammar, but by reading and writing in meaningful contexts” (Li, 2006, p. 13).

Integrity in the Indonesian Testing and Assessment

No matter how professionally-prepared a testing instrument is, if fairness and honesty before, during, and after the test administration are not maintained, the validity of the test will come into question. “The result of the National Exam can be used, as mandated by the existing regulations, to map out the quality of education and to select students for higher levels of education, only if the index of integrity in doing the National Exam is high” (Saukah, 2015, p. 158). So far we have seen that the national exam results are not yet utilized for the purpose of improving teaching–learning process in the classroom.

Until the administration of the 2007 exam administration, ..., national exams at junior and senior high schools involving more than five million examinees had been mainly used as a determinant for passing different school year exams and for school-leaving certification, rather than for the improvement of teaching–learning pedagogy. (Hamied, 2012, p. 72–73)

Another important aspect related to testing is testees' autonomy, which in turn could grow self-confidence and honesty in taking the test. It is important to note "that autonomy should be nurtured among learners and that learner autonomy should not be translated as learning without a teacher" (Lengkanawati, 2016, p. 146).

Conclusion

This chapter has presented contemporary language policies within Indonesia's educational laws and regulations by examining how policymakers have responded to issues such as global competitiveness, teacher professionalism, and high-quality teacher education. It has highlighted the importance of teacher skills, the usage of the Indonesian language, curricular modifications, and assessment washback within the context of the multilingual environment, geographic position, population size, and economic status of the country. It has argued that tertiary ELTE in Indonesia must be revamped to respond to existing left-behind levels of teacher competencies and low achievement of high school students with respect to English language proficiency.

The ELTE programs have a critical role to play in bolstering the nation's educational competitiveness. Professional English instructors could only be created in a strong, professionally well-developed teacher education institution at the university level, without a doubt. Efforts must be taken immediately to expand and improve ELTE's autonomy and institutional health, including the expulsion of a large number of underperforming teacher education institutions. Research reports on teacher education abound in the Indonesian context, and the stakeholders, especially policymakers, need to review and act on them.

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Chapter 28

“Not Proper Teaching”: The Beliefs and Experiences of Novice Native Speaker English Language Teachers in the UK



Jane Jenvey

Abstract This chapter reports on a longitudinal study of predominantly native speaker English language teachers training on ‘alternative route’ (Freeman, 2017) pre-service courses in London who subsequently go on to teach mainly in private organisations in various global contexts. It critically examines beliefs about the nature and status of the profession in a Britain, Australasia and North America (BANA) context from a sociocultural perspective. Amongst the issues examined are the role of native speaker expertise, and the position of the ‘international’ teacher in local pedagogical contexts. The implications for the profession of the commodification both of the English language and the English language teacher are also considered. It draws on the notion of investment in order to shed light on current approaches to engagement and commitment to the English language teaching profession.

Keywords Commitment in teaching · Beliefs about ELT · Investment · ELT Teacher Education

Introduction

“Do EFL teachers have careers?” It has been 24 years since Bill Johnston posed this question in the TESOL Quarterly (Johnston, 2003). The matter is still salient, as ELT in this continues to be regarded by some in centre contexts as a ‘dubious career path’ (Marr & English, 2019). The issue is more than a matter of perception. Though largely undocumented, rates of ELT teacher attrition in the private sector following alternative route qualifications are widely acknowledged to be very high and moreover, have a negative impact on the profession (Valeo & Faez, 2013). In spite of the fact that this should be a key concern for English language teacher educators there are few studies focussing on the process of developing engagement with teaching as it unfolds over time. Many teachers do end up dedicating their working lives to teaching English, and there are several studies of their career paths (e.g.

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Garton & Richards, 2008; Neilsen, 2009), but this is mostly retrospective research from the perspective of those already committed to the profession. The many people who begin pre-service courses in ELT and eventually drop out of teaching, and their reasons for staying, or leaving the profession are underrepresented in research.

There are many short initial training courses in English language teaching in the UK; the most widely recognised being the Trinity Cert TESOL and the Cambridge Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults (CELTA) which are typically delivered over 120 or 130 h per course. The present study focusses on teachers who take CELTA, perhaps the best known route for teacher preparation in private sector ELT (Gray & Block, 2012). The award is very popular worldwide with 10,000 people a year completing the qualification on 1500 courses at 300 centres in 70 countries, according to their website (www.cambridge.org/2021).

In this particular context, commitment to ELT has a slightly different character to other fields of education. Many native speakers English teachers (NESTs) embark on such courses in the UK with no clear long-term plan. It is therefore not straightforward to establish if a teacher is engaged with their work. The concept is further complicated by the fact that in private sector ELT there is no established career path or single set of qualifications to provide evidence of commitment. Finally, the concept has to be defined not only in the context of private sector ELT, with its high proportion of temporary teachers, but working lives in general, which are increasingly characterised by fragmentation and the growth of the portfolio career.

Commitment as a Concept

Commitment appears to be a straightforward term used in everyday language and is apparently commonly used by teachers themselves to describe their engagement with their work (Nias, 1981). It is related to motivation, in that it signifies purposefulness, but it also incorporates action and persistence, which makes it a useful concept in longitudinal research, as it encompasses the things that people do, and how practices develop over time. Employing the concept of commitment also enables a link between the unobservable, mental dimensions of people's lives such as beliefs and their visible manifestations (Moodie, 2015). The concept has been quite widely applied in studies of workplace learning (e.g. Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001) and in mainstream teacher education research (Nias, 1981) but less often in ELT.

Investment

The study of the factors implicated in commitment involves a focus on what motivates people to enter the profession and to continue to engage with their work. Research literature on language learners' and teachers' motivation is extensive in ELT (e.g. Dörnyei, 2005; Gardner, 1988; Ushioda, 2012). These studies tend to focus on the

cognitive, psychological aspects of engagement and learning in individuals. The mid-1990s onwards saw the beginnings of a change of emphasis in research of this type. On the basis of her enquiries into second language acquisition in female ESL learners in Canada, Peirce (1995) concluded that established theories of language learning were not sufficiently multidimensional, and so proposed the concept of investment as an alternative to motivation, taking into account the contextual, sociological dimensions of learners' lives. From this perspective, commitment is not just a product of motivation but a complex interaction between the choices people make, based on the aspirations presented to them and the external conditions of their social lives. The theory of investment and the sociocultural approach to research generally has subsequently gone on to take on, “momentous historical significance because it captures an important shift in the spirit of the times” (Kramsch, 2013, p.192).

Investment has also been a key theory in several studies of language teachers and language teacher education in recent years (Mastrella-de-Andrade & Norton, 2011; Sanches Silva, 2013). Of particular relevance to the present research is the study of the career trajectories of two groups of ELT teachers in Mexico (Mora, Trejo & Roux, 2014). The authors used investment as an explanatory theory to account for differences in engagement, commitment and persistence between ‘bilingual’ (returning from the US) and non-native English speaking teachers (NNESTs). Using Norton’s theory to account for their findings the authors conclude that the NNESTs see English language teaching as a means to increase their economic, social and cultural capital, and are therefore more invested in the practice than the returnees from the US.

Commitment in Practice

I have thus far argued that the value of studying commitment rather than simply motivation is the attention empirical research can give to what teachers actually do, as well as what they think and say. The challenge is operationalising the concept and deciding what constitutes manifestations of commitment, especially in a field of education where there are such widely varying cultural practices, contexts and standards. The approach taken here is to draw on some of the extensive body of research on professionalism in ELT. In the following section, I discuss these various strands of research and identify those of relevance to this study. I will argue that although the literature on professionalism is very useful to draw on it is generally a problematic term in the context of ELT.

ELT as a Profession

A study of ELT teachers’ professional lives implies that ELT is a profession. There has been a great deal of debate over whether or not this is the case in the context of private education (e.g. Crookes, 2009; Edstam, 2001; Garton & Richards, 2008).

Many voices from within ELT maintain that it is an occupational profession and point to, amongst other features, the accreditation of private language schools (Bowers, 1986), the credibility of ELT qualifications (Wilson & Poulter, 2015) the professional organisations (Alatis, 1987) and the growth of ELT journals, conferences and university departments (Burns & Richards, 2009; Howatt & Widdowson, 2004). As long ago as 1986 Bowers declared that, ‘we have built ourselves a profession’ (p. 397) and that ‘this business [ELT] increasingly sees itself and projects itself as in the fullest sense professional’ (p. 398). In recent years the first studies of teachers who have had long and successful careers in ELT have appeared (e.g. Garton & Richards, 2008) and there has been a focus on ‘ever-increasing professionalisation’ (Pulverness, 2015).

However, there is evidence that ELT is still a low status career and that the majority of ELT teachers are not rewarded materially for their work to the same degree as teachers in other fields of education (Breshears, 2004; Johnston, 2003; Neilsen, 2009). There is some literature which discusses the influence of poor pay and conditions on professionalism (e.g. Anderson, 2002; Breshears, 2004; Senior, 2006). Nevertheless, a great deal of writing on ELT education assumes that the professional status of groups of teachers can be raised by an increase in professional development or recording of professional knowledge, without reference to the constraints of external conditions. Another significant matter is that ELT is not perceived to be a true profession by the general public, teachers in other fields or even by many ELT teachers themselves (e.g. Borg, 2006; Ferguson & Donno, 2003; Neilsen, 2009); in fact, it is considered, “the lowest of the low” (Breshears, 2004, p. 23). In her study of the experiences of practising ELT teachers in Australia, Senior found participants believed the “overwhelming consensus of opinion” amongst the general public was that private sector ELT was not a profession (2006, p. 237). Johnston (2003) similarly reports that “although many teachers strive to be professionals their aspirations are not reflected in the way their work is perceived by those around them” (2003, p. 108).

These perceptions likely stem from the belief it is relatively easy for native speakers to become ELT teachers with few or no qualifications (Ferguson & Donno, 2003; Freeman, 2017; Johnston, 2003; Marr & English, 2019). The term ‘backpacker syndrome’ (Anderson, 2002) describes the corollary that ELT is associated with temporary adventurers and that ELT is not ‘real’ teaching (Clayton, 1990). Of course, these popular perceptions do not necessarily give a full or ‘true’ picture of ELT, which has a great number of qualified and committed teachers as well as backpackers. There is also evidence that as the field has matured it has become a lifelong career for many. However, perceptions matter because of the fact that, ‘How an occupational group is viewed by the general public determines in part the group’s level of professionalism’ (Breshears, 2004, p. 3). This is illustrated in the words of one participant in Anderson’s study of EFL teachers at a British university who declares that, “if my profession is a mickey mouse one, what’s the point of giving the impression I’m committed to it?” (Anderson, 2002, p. 242). Perceptions of ELT as a profession are therefore closely linked to professionalism and teachers’ sense of themselves as professionals.

A tension, therefore, exists between the academic voice of professionalisation in ELT and the realities of what many teachers believe and experience (Anderson, 2002;

Breshears, 2004). The studies discussed above suggest that these factors are implicated in both personal job satisfaction and decisions about whether to update, modify and develop professional knowledge and practice, in other words, that perceptions and working conditions are linked to commitment.

The concept of what constitutes a profession or professionalism has been shifting in recent years. Hargreaves (2000) maintains that market orientation and competition in education generally has brought about ‘assaults’ on professionalism, such that we are experiencing an era of post professionalism in teaching and this is echoed by Gray and Block (2012) who point to increasing marketization in ELT challenging teacher professionalism which has led to a ‘recalibration’ of teacher education. There is much evidence that employment as a whole has become more precarious, with the disappearance of stable jobs (e.g. Fleming, 2017) and a work environment where, “moving on is the new normal” (Gershon, 2017). The distinction between ‘real’ lifetime professions and potentially short term ones like ELT may be becoming less useful.

Teachers’ Beliefs and Teacher Education

Empirical studies from the 1990s onwards established that language teachers hold beliefs from a wide variety of sources which function as sets of principles about teaching (e.g. Richards, Tung & Ng, 1992). The consensus that beliefs about teaching shape what teachers do, and that an understanding of the process can help support both pre-service and in-service teacher education prevails, and underpins all research discussed in the most recent review of work in the field (Borg, 2015).

Nevertheless, even with a clear starting point, research in this field has a number of issues. Beliefs are difficult to uncover, as they are complex and unobservable and the link between beliefs and behaviour is often difficult to make. Many studies have found a ‘mismatch’ between what teachers say they believe and what they do (e.g. Sato & Kleinasser, 1999). Thompson (1992) points out that it is better to view beliefs and behaviour as mutually informing rather than to try to establish clear cut links between them.

Teachers’ Beliefs: Terminology

Perhaps the greatest terminological debate in this area concerns the distinction between knowledge and belief. Fenstermacher (1994) claims that knowing something is, ‘epistemologically different from simply having a belief in something’ (p. 29). The key element of this epistemological distinction is ‘truth’. In contrast, beliefs are seen as representations of reality which are accepted as true by individuals (Richardson, 1996). Although the formal distinction between knowledge and belief is often made in teacher cognition research (e.g. Calderhead, 1996; Richardson, 1996),

Fenstermacher (1994) recognises that the distinction is problematic in practice. These categories of thought are difficult to operationalise in research because knowledge and beliefs cannot be directly observed or measured and have to be inferred from what people say or do (Pajares, 1992). Furthermore, they are entwined in the mind of the teacher (Verloop, Van Driel & Meijer, 2001) and difficult for the researcher to interpret. For this reason, it has been suggested that a clear distinction is not tenable, and fruitless in interpretive research (Borg, 2015). Woods (1996) concludes that knowledge and belief should be regarded as a spectrum and a similar approach is taken here.

Teachers' Beliefs: Widening the Perspective

A further argument for employing broad, integrated concepts and established terminology is the matter of accessibility. Teacher education research should ultimately be about educational practices and practitioners. Borg (2015) argues that the issue with paying a great deal of attention to philosophical differences between knowledge and belief, or adopting new terminology for concepts which are already well understood by stakeholders is the risk of obscuring what is relevant and applicable to real life practice.

Teacher cognition research has also been problematised most recently for taking an 'unduly narrow' approach (Crookes, 2015). Much of the writing in the field has tended to reflect its psychological heritage with a focus on what individual teachers think, know and believe. An alternative perspective views cognition as 'distributed' (Hutchins & Klausen, 1996) or 'collective' (England, 2017) that is to say, emerging from interactions between people and things. Learning has also increasingly been viewed as a collective, social process (Vygotsky, 1987; Wenger, 1998). Such socio-cultural or 'situated' perspectives of teacher learning take into account the complexity of contexts in which teachers develop and widen the 'conceptual geography' of the domain.

The Study

The data discussed here are drawn from a longitudinal study of pre-service English language teachers in London who were followed over a period of 2 years from the start of CELTA courses. The aim of the study was to examine the role of teachers' beliefs and experiences in the development of commitment to ELT, in order to inform teacher educators of pre-service programmes. 17 participants were involved in the study; 15 of whom were NESTs. None of them had previous experience of ELT. The data is qualitative and consists of a series of interviews carried out in three phases. The interviews were transcribed and thematic analysis was carried out. The data was presented in the form of case studies of 4 individual teachers together with cross

sectional analysis of the rest of the cohort. In this section of the chapter some general findings are reported from the body of data as a whole, together with a focus on the case studies of two particular participants. These participants have been chosen for inclusion here as they represent the dominant themes emerging from the cohort as a whole.

Findings and Discussion

Of the seventeen participants in this study, 7 did not teach English language at all after the course and only three were teaching two years after the CELTA course, though others said they may teach in the future. This corresponds with one of the few studies on teacher attrition in a similar context in ELT carried out amongst 147 ESL teachers in Canada which found that only one third were teaching three years after their pre-service training and a quarter had never taught at all (Valeo & Faez, 2013). In the case of the present study, those who did not teach at all after the course said that they had not been able to find the work they hoped for. The others who worked for less than two years after the course said that they had only intended to teach temporarily or were unhappy with the pay or conditions of the work they found. Teacher attrition is an issue in itself, as it represents instability and disenchantment with the profession and a wasted investment of time and money, in the case of those who never taught at all. Of equal concern are the teachers' beliefs about ELT and their experiences as novice teachers.

The first case is Peter who is 54-years-old and had a career in human resources in a business environment for many years. He decided on a career and lifestyle change and after completing the CELTA course he moved from the UK to Italy. However, Peter did not find teaching work there and at the end of the two years of the study he returned to the UK where he decided to take another different direction in his career. The other participant is Sami who was 22-years-old at the start of the study. Following the CELTA course he taught children in China for a year and a half before returning to the UK to do a Masters' degree in a subject unrelated to ELT.

Peter and Sami's stories shed light on significant issues for ELT. First of all, although they were happy to achieve their goal of living in a new country for a whilst, many aspects of their experiences were disappointing or stressful, and did not match their expectations. Secondly, some of the beliefs emerging from the interviews appear to show a striking lack of awareness about the nature of expertise in ELT, which may account for some of the tensions and difficulties in their pre-service training and early teaching experiences. Finally, finding work and teaching proved much more challenging than they expected and they were both somewhat jaded by their experiences. Even if starting to teach had been straightforward, they both lacked the networks available to novice teachers in other fields of teaching which would normally support them and help to establish a community and develop their identities as teachers. Some of these key findings are discussed thematically below.

Beliefs About ELT: ELT as Easy Work and a Temporary Adventure

For Sami and Peter, ELT was a temporary diversion from the paths of their normal working lives. Sami also believed that teaching children in China would be less demanding than in the UK, which points to some expectation that ELT is a fairly easy and stress-free occupation. Both participants were very surprised at how challenging they found the CELTA course. Peter reflected after he had done the course that the level of planning and preparation demanded of a novice teacher would not make teaching worthwhile, given the rates of pay;

...you know it is about 12, 13 euros an hour to teach, which translates as 11, 12 pounds and given the state of my experience I'd have to prepare at least an hour for every hour of teaching time, and at that point I just thought well actually no [laughs] (Peter, Interview 3)

Sami also said that he had learned that, to his surprise, it was a very time consuming and stressful job. These reactions seem to indicate that neither of them had realised ELT could be demanding, and therefore not necessarily easy to combine with a pleasant interlude in life. In his first interview Sami said of ELT that;

It is not something I'm going to do for the rest of my life. My plan at the moment is to do two years, no more than three, and then come back to the UK and do a proper full-time career. (Sami, Interview 1)

Sami's use of the word 'proper' and the fact that he also referred to those teaching outside ELT as 'actual' teachers suggest that he saw ELT as in some ways a less legitimate, lower status type of work. This seems to be an important belief to address, not only because of the expectations it creates about the nature of the work involved but as an ethical issue for ELT as a whole.

Beliefs About Private Sector ELT: ELT as an Industry

Although the majority of English language teachers worldwide work in state-sponsored education, Peter and Sami believed the field to be a substantial global business. Peter explicitly stated that as a native speaker he knew he was in demand as a commodity;

It is a smart thing to do to leverage those language skills, which you know, there is a market for. Great being English really you know is not it? (Peter, Interview 1)

Sami saw this demand as an opportunity to gain independence from his family and enjoy a lifestyle he could not afford in London. Studies on perceptions of private sector ELT point to a strong commercial focus being a distinguishing feature (e.g. Borg, 2006). This is not surprising as, although the majority of English language teachers worldwide work in state-sponsored education, ELT has long been marked by a large private sector. As long ago as 1987 White stated that, "ELT is a service industry,

supplying people with a service (English language teaching) and a commodity—the English language” (White, 1987, p. 221). John Haycraft, who originally developed the teaching qualification which was to evolve into CELTA, described his motivation as stemming from the realisation that “with our language we are sitting on a fortune” (Haycraft, 1998, p. 201). Private sector ELT has often been characterised in the research literature as a business as much as a pedagogical activity (e.g. Block, Gray & Holborrow, 2012; Pennycook, 2017) in which the distinction between industry and profession is blurred (Neilsen, 2009). Sami was able to find work in China which allowed him to have a higher standard of living than was possible on a starting salary in London, and this was one of the most important reasons why he judged his experience of ELT to be a success. However, he was very critical of the way his organisation treated its employees and towards the end of his time in China his heavy workload and poor treatment became very stressful;

I’m just not I’m not enjoying it anymore and the second reason is I just a bit burnt out I’m just tired because this school is not like we are not like an actual school it is like part of a private school it is not an actual school we are like the language centre the extra classes and in the summer they made us work the whole summer. (Sami, Interview 3)

Peter was also unable to find financially rewarding work which he was happy with. Peter and Sami’s experiences reveal a disconnection between the understanding that ELT as a whole makes a great deal of money, a lot of it based on the cachet of the native speaker, and the fact that individual teachers do not generally benefit from this.

Beliefs About ELT: The Nature of Teacher Expertise

As far as beliefs about ELT teachers and teaching are concerned, it is noteworthy that neither Peter nor Sami knew any teachers well, and the teachers they had come across did not have careers in ELT. This meant not only that they had little exposure to information about what it was like to work in ELT, but also that they did not have ELT role models or mentors. This is an atypical way to start out in teaching, since most novice teachers have their experiences as learners to draw on, if not friends or family to consult. It is well established that the concept of the apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 1975), or the period of exposure to teachers and teaching at school and college, makes a significant contribution to teachers’ beliefs and practices. Pre-service native speaker teachers of English are in the unusual position of never having formally learned the subject they are preparing to teach. The lack of formal attention to knowledge about language (KAL) in UK schools until recently is well attested, (e.g. Coffey, 2020; Marr & English, 2019) as are the low and declining rates of modern foreign language learning (Collen, 2020). This means they have not been exposed to teaching repertoires which can function as ‘ready-made recipes for action’ (Buchmann, 1987) supporting the novice teachers’ experience. Much of the literature on the apprenticeship of observation in the context of ELT assumes that

skills developed or witnessed in other areas of teaching are transferrable to ELT (e.g. Borg, 2006). However, there is also evidence that useful previous experience needs to have been in the same context and in the case of foreign language teaching this really needs to be as a foreign language learner (Ellis, 2008). Peter himself said that although he assumed his experience in training would help on the CELTA course, he found that the content of the teaching made a difference to the skill of delivering it.

The most striking fact about Peter and Sami is that both of them chose to give up foreign language learning at the age of 16 as they did not enjoy it and they were not successful at it. In fact, the majority of the 17 participants did the same, with only 4 choosing to study languages beyond the age of 16. They are not unusual in this respect, as the UK has very low, and declining, rates of foreign language learning (Collen, 2020). What is notable is how unusual it is to embark on teaching something you do not have much experience of and you did not enjoy learning.

Peter and Sami, in common with many people of their age educated in the UK, had little instruction on English grammar (Marr & English, 2019). Peter said that he was not interested in this aspect of the CELTA course;

S: ... I find that more interesting than learning about actual meaning and form and all that stuff

J: so, you do not really like that language side of it?

S: I'm not a fan of it no

(Peter, Interview 1).

Peter felt very strongly that learning about English grammar was not helpful;

I mean the attention the detail that you have got to get into with language training makes it a different kind of experience for me. I mean when I look at all the [laughs] jargon that surrounds formal grammar how, I mean I find it quite unhelpful a lot of it ... I mean jargon is meant to be used by experts who know what the jargon means and I find the formal grammar language a little bit hard to get my head around. (Peter, Interview 1)

This seems to point to a large gap in understanding the nature of teachers' expertise. The issue is not only a previous lack of exposure to declarative knowledge of English, as this is very common in native speakers of English. Of greater concern is the lack of awareness that such knowledge is part of a teachers' professional repertoire. This might go some way to explaining Peter and Sami's underestimation of what teaching English involves. Peter seemed surprised at how skilled it is, and both of them found the CELTA course much more demanding than they expected.

A mismatch of expectations is problematic for pre-service teachers as it can lead to stress and disappointment, but it also indicates a bigger issue for ELT as a whole. A belief that ELT is easy and something any native speaker can do is likely to contribute to the perception that it is a low status profession. Perceptions matter, as they inevitably construct a social reality. Both Peter and Sami discovered that teachers are not rewarded well for their work, although this was not of great consequence to them as temporary teachers, it is an important concern for the many other teachers who try to make a living long-term.

For Peter and Sami, as perhaps for a large proportion of NESTs starting out in ELT, their motivations for teaching are directly linked to personal and individual

desires for new experiences. They did not appear to know very much about who their students were who the other teachers were or the nature of what they did. This is significant because although it is extremely diverse, ELT has many unifying characteristics such as pre-service qualifications like CELTA, published materials used worldwide, international professional associations and a very well-developed academic literature. And yet, it seems that many teachers in this context starting out are not aware of this and their early, isolated and isolating experiences as teachers compound this situation.

None of the teachers involved in the study was members of formal or informal, international or local teacher networks or professional associations. Moreover, very few of them had mentors or were required or encouraged to continue their professional development by employers. Above all, the nature of their employment, mostly outside the mainstream education system, and the fact that cultural differences or personal preference meant that they mixed mainly with transient ‘expatriate’ English speaking communities created a situation in which the teachers were not fully engaged or invested in their teaching identities.

Conclusion

Worldwide demand for English language teaching and the enduring cachet of the native speaker teacher created a market for teacher education which shows no sign of declining in popularity. The starting point of the study is that whilst many NESTs in this context are drawn to ELT because of the appeal of ‘doing something different’ for a short period of their lives, this need not preclude engagement in the profession for however long they are involved in it. The study indicates that at present, NESTs embarking on ELT in this context have a limited understanding of language teaching expertise and of the extent of the ELT professional community. This is a problem for the individual teachers themselves who are likely to find their early teaching experiences stressful and isolating. It is also a matter for the profession as a whole, as perceptions perpetuate many of the longstanding issues for ELT, such as attrition and poor pay and working conditions. The findings indicate a need for teacher educators to raise awareness of the nature of ELT expertise and of the existence of professional communities.

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Chapter 29

(Re)thinking Initial Teacher Education Curriculum: Toward Equitable, Crisis-Ready TESOL



Tae-Hee Choi and Prem Prasad Poudel

Abstract The devastating impact of COVID-19 on the education sector calls for broader reforms in teacher education programmes and their curricula, both in the developed and the developing world. Teachers now require more resources, access, and skills to deal with the resultant changes in teaching and learning conditions. The policymakers, educators, and school leaders have become keenly aware of the need to prepare teachers for crisis-induced disruptions in educational provision, to maintain the quality and equity of education. The understanding of what the existing traditional teacher education curricula lack, and how these can be enhanced for ensuring crisis-readiness is essential. Drawing on an analysis of Teaching English for Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) initial teacher education (TESOL ITE) materials and curricula from the two contexts of South Korea and Nepal previous to COVID-19-induced lockdown, this chapter presents the common core of TESOL TE programmes in these two contexts. It also discusses actions to be taken to ensure the quality and equity of TESOL delivered in a remote mode induced by large-scale crises like COVID-19, drawing on previous research. It concludes with suggestions for rethinking the TESOL ITE curricula, for consideration by language teacher educators, programme writers, and policymakers.

Keywords TESOL · Initial teacher education · Pre-service teacher education · Language teacher expertise · Teacher education · Crisis-ready · Remote learning · Equitable education

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R. Khan et al. (eds.), *Local Research and Global Perspectives in English Language Teaching*, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-6458-9_29

Introduction

Teacher education (TE) programmes need to reflect social changes as well as deliver fundamental cores. Teachers, as professionals, are commonly required to possess knowledge (e.g. pedagogy and subject), skills, and ethical judgment (Winch, 2004) to contribute toward ensuring learning opportunities for all children. Meanwhile, the COVID-19 outbreak has led to a dramatic change in the education system, in which virtual teaching and remote learning have become the new normal, requiring teachers to possess new skills. During the pandemic, teachers' roles have become diversified and more complex. In particular, with the increasing importance of home learning and with minimized and suspended support for marginal students' learning, the issue of educational equity has come to the fore. Against this background, governments and scholars alike are concerned with what changes are to be made to make teachers ready for crisis-induced disruptions in educational provision and respond to the emergent needs of students.

Drawing on a framework on (language) teacher expertise synthesized from relevant studies, the chapter discusses the aspirations of initial teacher education (ITE) programmes, also known as pre-service teacher education courses, and based on that aims to identify areas of a necessary revision to make teachers crisis-ready, sensitive to local needs and capable of dealing with the emerging challenges such as the barriers set by the COVID-19 pandemic. It first discusses the common cores of traditional ITE curricula based on the analysis of the English teacher education (ETE) materials such as textbooks and courses endorsed in the two contexts of South Korea (hereafter Korea) and Nepal, prior to COVID-19. The focus on these contexts provides representative cases of high- vs limited-resource countries in Asia. It then discusses what teachers need to do to ensure the quality and equity of remote learning induced by the pandemic, and how they can be reflected in initial English teacher education (IETE), drawing on available research on schooling in the context of pandemic (e.g. Choi & Chiu, 2021). Finally, suggestions are made for consideration by language teacher educators, course developers, material writers, and policymakers.

Conceptualization of Teacher Expertise

Ample literature has documented the notion of teacher expertise and the changing landscapes of teachers' competencies across several contexts. The notion of 'expertise' is broadly agreed upon as referring to the state of being efficient and effortless in performing as a teacher (Farrell, 2013). It is 'knowing how' (e.g. Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1986), and thus, it is "a process rather than a state" considering the evolutionary nature of the teaching profession (Tsui, 2012, p. 17) conditioned by social, political, technological, and other relevant developments (Sachs, 2003).

Scholars who have endeavored to understand the nature of teaching expertise explain it as requiring ‘practical knowledge’ that is governed by their personal goal and identity and thus includes ‘personal knowledge’ (Claidinin & Connelly, 2004). Tsui (2012) argues that teacher knowledge and teachers’ specific contexts of work are dialectically related and are construed and reconstructed through their constant engagement in reflection and reframing. In addition, while teachers experience complexities in the classroom contexts due to the unpredictability of classroom events, teacher expertise requires going beyond the traditional notion of knowledge of the subject matter to incorporate the capacity to take immediate contextualized decisions which require the knowledge of the learners, contexts, cultures and professional ethics and standards (e.g. the laws). While there have been several scholars who have delineated the components of teacher expertise or teacher knowledge (e.g. Golombek, 1998; Shulman, 1987), this chapter draws largely on Tsui’s (2012) conceptualization of teacher knowledge as situated knowledge that is enhanced while teachers respond to the specific contexts in which they operate. This continues to relate further to the notion of ‘reflection’ that facilitates teachers to bring out the unarticulated level of awareness (Farrell, 2013). In other words, being “engaged in reflexive examination of their own beliefs and actions” (Leung, 2009, p. 53) would develop their capability to deal with multi-dimensional, current and potential challenges. Table 29.2 elaborates the theoretical constructs of the English teacher knowledge, identified through critical analysis of key research on English teacher expertise (e.g. Banegas, 2020; Golombek, 1998; Shulman, 1986, 1987; Tsui, 2012), which formed a framework for curricula analysis conducted for this study, as detailed below.

Analysis of the Common Core of IETE

The Case Contexts

As in both Korea and Nepal, English is considered a key individual capital indispensable for social mobility and societal tool to reach out to the world (Choi, 2021; Poudel & Choi, 2021), English is taught as one of the core subjects of the school curriculum. The review of the course materials in the universities in Korea and Nepal showed that IETE materials are largely adopted from the western world and were developed in consideration of the contexts outside of these two cases. Both authors’ experience as teacher educators confirms that the reference materials prepared by teacher certifying institutes and local writers borrow key concepts from the authors such as Richards and Rodgers (2009), Larsen-Freeman (2008), Brown (2001, 2014), and Harmer (2008), or use these as textbooks. While both contexts are teaching English as a foreign language, the nature of the curricular materials and the goals of ETE programmes and their aspiration for ideal teacher education are largely similar.

Table 29.1 Domains of pre-service English language teacher expertise

Types of knowledge	Domain	Sub-domain	Core concern
General pedagogical knowledge (GPK)	Philosophy of teaching	Psychological theories	Critique or develop own practice
	Planning and preparation	Microteaching	Learn to plan to teach, and simulate
		Instruction	Lesson presentation
	Lesson management		Timing, organization, coherence, and cohesion
	Classroom environment	Classroom management	Seating arrangement, materials, and interaction
		Classroom climate	Encouragement and interaction
		Discipline	Managing disruptive behavior to ensure safe learning environment for all
Assessment	Formative and summative assessment	Designing tests, and learning to administer	
Professional development	Self-growth	Learning about teaching	
Content/ELT knowledge (CK)	Knowledge about the language	Core and applied linguistics	The basics of phonetics, phonology, and grammar, sociolinguistics
	Ability to use the language	Grammar in use; pragmatics and semantics	Learning about accuracy and appropriateness
	Theories of language acquisition and learning	Second language acquisition and learning	Learning English as a second language; English as a foreign language, knowledge of learning theories
	Theories of language teaching	Teacher and learning centered approaches	Communicative language teaching, TBLT,
	Language testing	Test preparations	Test types, grading and reporting and feedback
Context knowledge (CtK)	Social	social stereotyping	Social attitudes about language,
	Educational	Inequities and inequalities (Access and quality)	Learning and learners Testing and assessment systems, Authority and control
Self-knowledge (SK)	Individual as a person	Personality factors such as motivation and aptitude	Teachers' struggles and histories
	Individual as a manager of learning	Personal commitments and control over learning by self	Self-directed and regulated learning
	Individual as a member of the school community	Individual's interaction with the institutional community	Individual's agency in the associated institutions' affairs
	Individual as a member of the teaching profession	Individuals' interaction and engagement with professional communities	Teachers' engagement in professional communities such as teacher associations, support groups, and so on

Despite such similarities, some differences across these contexts have been observed. Nepal being a developing country, the reform initiatives in the education system are largely donor-driven. For instance, a large portion of higher education development grants in Nepal is from the World Bank, which also influences the expansion and access of teacher education programmes (Poudel & Choi, 2022). Unlike Nepal, the Korean government is the main funding source for educational reforms, and therefore the reforms are largely state-regulated (see Choi, 2021). In Korea, the ETE curricula are left to the discretion of the instructors—although the curriculum is strictly regulated in terms of its structure (e.g. the number of cores and electives), its implementation monitored (Choi, 2022), while in Nepal it is strictly based on the prescribed syllabus. Hence the TE programmes in the two contexts differ in terms of the nature of funding, mode of regulation and teacher autonomy, all of which largely influence the quality of their programmes.

COVID-19 and Challenges of the New Normal

The outbreak of COVID-19 has induced a myriad of changes in both contexts, including the mode of teaching and learning, in which lessons are now being conducted remotely. At the same time, the sudden shift to remote learning, now established as a new normal in education, has illuminated the systemic inequities in education in both developed and developing worlds, such as Korea and Nepal in this case. As remote learning requires students to have sufficient access to the capital (economic, human, cultural, social, see Bourdieu, 2018) at home to access the corresponding capital at school (Hodges et al., 2020), the conventional and currently expanding socio-economic divides have caused unequal learning conditions for the children (Kim et al., 2021; Poudel, 2020). These changes, however, have not only posed challenges to students but also teachers in terms of the availability of resources and their expertise in handling the unexpectedly emerging remote learning conditions. The physical closure of the educational institutions has provided an edge to those proficient with technology-assisted learning and teaching. For others, especially in the rural contexts of developing countries such as Nepal, it has caused a great learning loss, due to the complete disconnection between teachers and the students, lacking minimum infrastructure for virtual connectivity (Choi & Chiu, 2021; Poudel, 2020). Thus, there are uneven consequences of such forms of the digital divide (van Dijk, 2000) across different contexts. The closure resulted in long-term changes in pedagogy, making technology-assisted teaching the norm (Watermeyer, Chen & Ang, 2021). This change requires teachers to play a critical role, especially in the context where there is minimum access to the technology infrastructure. In an underprivileged context, teachers need skills and knowledge to navigate through the resource constraints and educational inequalities while discharging their pedagogical responsibilities. This context of teachers experiencing technical challenges has emerged as a wake-up call for

Table 29.2 Key materials reviewed from IETE programmes

Authors Universities → ↓	SNU	KU-K	SWU	TU	KU-N	MWU	FWU	Title of the materials ^a
Richards and Rodgers (2009)	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	Approaches and methods...
Larsen-Freeman (2008)	V				V	V	–	Techniques and principles in language teaching
Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011)	V	V						Techniques and principles in language teaching
Ur (2012)				V	V	V	V	A course in English language teaching
Scrivener (2005)				V	V	V	V	Learning teaching...
Harmer (2008)	V			V		V	V	The practice of...
Richards and Farrell (2008)				V	V	V	V	Professional development for...
Head and Taylor (1997)				V	V	V	V	For teacher development course
Awasthi (2009)				V	V	V	V	Only one paper in the Nepal context
Tsui (2009)				V			V	Teaching expertise...
Burns and Richards (2009)					–	–	V	The Cambridge guide to second language...
Hedge (2001)							V	Teaching and learning...
Brown and Lee (2015); Brown (2001)	V	V		V		V	V	Teaching by Principles..., Principles of language learning...
Ledefoged and Johnson (2011)	V			V	V	V	V	A course in phonetics
Larsen-Freeman and Celce-Murcia (2016)	V			V			V	The grammar book: form, meaning, and use...
Nunan (2003)	V			V				Practical English language teaching
Schmitt and Rodgers (2020)	V							An introduction to applied linguistics (3rd Ed)
Hughes (2003)	V			V	V	V	–	Testing for language teachers

^aThe materials refer to prescribed textbooks and learning materials including book chapter and articles (as relevant). Refer to the list of references for the complete title

teacher educators and policymakers to integrate technological, and socio-emotional competencies in their TE curricula to enable teachers to deal with the magnitude of unexpected challenges such as the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Methods and Data

To gain an understanding of the ideal pre-service English language teacher expertise that is pursued by Korea and Nepal, the authors reviewed relevant policies, prescribed curricula if relevant, and the syllabi and teaching materials of the selected teaching universities from those countries. The analysis of the IETE courses was conducted in the expectation that the ideas expressed therein represent an ‘ideal’ which the teaching profession is pursuing, as imagined by the respective institutions (or countries). The criteria of choosing the case institutions, and their curricula were: their popularity, coverage, and availability; the nature of the programme offered (i.e. English education and TESOL). The findings of the analysis of the data have been reported in themes that emerged during an inductive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), as well as deductive analysis guided by the framework built from the synthesis of the literature on ELT expertise and teacher expertise in general (e.g. Banegas, 2020; Golombek, 1998; Shulman, 1986, 1987; Tsui, 2012).

The data consists of the following: from Korea, English teacher education courses of 3 universities, namely, Seoul National University (SNU), Korea University (KU-K), Sookmyung Woman’s University (SWU). Similarly, from Nepal, the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) and Master of Education (M.Ed.) in English education courses from Tribhuvan University (TU), Kathmandu University (KU-N), Mid-western University (MWU), and Far-Western University (FWU) were reviewed. The courses of these 7 universities’ English teacher education programmes largely represent the respective case contexts as they are the dominant institutions providing IETE programmes, and therefore have wider coverage and influence in the respective contexts. All the universities integrated professional academic courses (i.e. the content knowledge) and experiential learning (practicum and internship in schools) as requirements in their IETE programmes. The courses reviewed here were developed and executed before the pandemic, some recent and others years old. Irrespective of what has been unofficially happening in response to the pandemic, this review provides details of what is offered and what is missing in the official, published programmes and attempts to provide some suggestions to enable teachers to deal with unpredictable crises or crisis-induced challenges such as the current shift to the online mode of teaching.

Although several courses on methodology, applied linguistics, language testing, sociolinguistics, and literature are taught in the IETE programmes of the selected universities, Table 29.1 presents only the popular and available textbooks in the two case contexts. These textbooks are mostly used as the learning materials in the courses on subject areas such as ELT methodology, applied linguistics, phonetics

and phonology, materials development, language testing and assessment, and teacher professional development. However, it is to be noted that teachers might use these textbooks (including several editions of the listed ones) for several other courses based on the stipulated course-intended learning outcomes (CILOs) or course objectives stated or as deemed relevant by respective course tutors, and bring in other materials not specified in the syllabus.

Table 29.1 illustrates wider similarities of learning materials across the universities in Korea and Nepal. Although the nature of the courses and the title of the programmes differ, the course contents have high similarities, making the case interesting to explore. In both cases, materials used in the UK and the US contexts are adopted for their teacher education programmes. Adoption of TE curricular materials from the UK and the US is not uncommon elsewhere, as these are the prolific sites for ELT and teacher education research and development, or possibly due to the influence of native-speakerism (Holliday, 2006).

Domains of Teacher Expertise in Practice and Their Major Concerns in IETE

Drawing on the framework synthesized from the literature on ELT expertise, the teacher expertise is organized into the four major thematic categories: general pedagogical knowledge, content knowledge, context knowledge, and self-knowledge. These four categories of knowledge are further explored into the sub-domains and the core concerns in pre-service ETE courses. Then the documents from both contexts were analysed, in order to understand the current IETE curricula and identify areas of improvement.

Before presenting the results and discussion in detail, we emphasize that while these domains and sub-domains are established based on the review adopting common categories listed in IETE handbooks and related literature, they remain rather arbitrary, so that different researchers may have a different understanding of the nature of the domain, and the concerns on each domain. Also, the sub-domains and core concerns on each domain presented in Table 29.2 tend to overlap with one another. For instance, teaching philosophy concerns and influences all the other areas of practice including assessment; the assessment is categorized as separate from instruction, but assessment can be conducted within instruction as well as after instruction (both formative and summative). Although the types of knowledge and domain (plotted on the first two columns on Table 29.2 largely emerge from Tsui's framework and works of authors such as Banegas (2020), Chang (2007), Hedge (2001), and Day (1999), the detailed sub-categories and the major concerns are derived from the review of the selected courses and course contents from the two cases. In presenting the results, the cases of Korea and Nepal were treated as separate units and compared accordingly. First, we continue our discussion on the types of knowledge for teacher expertise.

General Pedagogical Knowledge (GPK)

The IETE curricula in both contexts extensively focused on the GPK. The modules on GPK cover the historical development of philosophies of education, planning for instruction, assessment, and professional development. In Korea, for example, SNU taught Harmer (2010) and Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011) as the major reference materials that covered most of the areas of GPK, i.e. the methods and techniques detailed with their theoretical and practical dimensions. The textbook by Harmer (2008), which is taught across both cases, starts each section with the theoretical framework and gives rationales for particular methods or activities, to help teachers choose from. In this sense, it is more practical and can be adopted contextually. Similarly, Hedge (2001) which is taught in Nepal's universities (e.g. M.Ed. TESOL of FWU) starts each section with what is known about the topic from both second language learning and teaching research and then draws up implications for teaching. She introduces currently popular approaches or methods, such as task-based learning or process writing, and presents excerpts from relevant teaching resources or provides simple activities or a set of questions or things to do, to facilitate teachers' pedagogic decisions. The materials used in the courses fully cover all areas of GPK. All six domains of GPK identified in the framework on Table 29.2 (i.e. the philosophy of teaching, planning and preparation, instruction, classroom environment, assessment, and professional development) were discussed in the course materials across Richards and Rodgers (2009), Brown (2001) and Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011). They familiarise the participants with different features of learners and language learning processes.

The nine sub-domains are addressed through courses which are specific to ELT and generic to all subjects. In Korea, for instance, two institutes taught the principles and practice of assessment across subjects, e.g. 'educational measurement' (in SNU). Most courses in both contexts were customized to provide ELT specific knowledge to be discussed in the following section, in addition to GPK.

Content/ELT Knowledge

Content knowledge, as Shulman (1986) claims, is inclusive of subject matter knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge. As teachers need to have "theoretical as well as practical knowledge of the subject matter that informs and is informed by their teaching; any portrait of teacher knowledge should include both aspects" (Wilson, Shulman & Ricert, 1987, p. 108). For this type of expertise, the literature suggests five domains: knowledge about the language, ability to use the language, theories of language acquisition and learning, theories of language teaching, and language testing. The courses in both Korea and Nepal included all domains of CK and their major concerns. For instance, they both include a large portion of the courses covering areas of applied linguistics, phonetics, grammar, and

teaching of language skills, vocabulary, and pronunciation. To develop the ability to use language correctly, courses such as semantics, pragmatics, and grammar are taught. Regarding the theories of language acquisition and learning, courses such as second language acquisition and learning are included. For instance, KU-K offers the course entitled ‘English acquisition theory, MWU offers a course entitled ‘Second language acquisition theories’, and KU offers ‘Second language acquisition’. In addition to these courses, the textbooks used in other courses such as Celce-Murcia (2001) and Brown (2001) discuss the role of L1 in facilitating or inhibiting second language learning. The same coursebooks and others (e.g. Richards & Rodgers, 2009; Brown & Lee, 2015; Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011) deal with language teaching methods such as communicative language teaching, natural approach, inductive and deductive ways of teaching, to develop students’ awareness about and ability to enact such methods in their classrooms. The final domain in CK relates to the assessment. The concerns of both contexts are overlapping as their contents are about test types, their design, grading, and administration. TU, FWU, and SNU used Hughes (2003) as the key learning material for language testing.

However, some differences in the nature of the content were observed between the courses offered in Korea and Nepal. For instance, in Nepal’s case, in TU, MWU, and FWU, several courses offered the contents on literature and translation, which in a way does not directly address the pedagogical issues, rather focus on the literary content and language development. However, in Korea, nearly all the courses focused on pedagogical contents, assessment, applied linguistics, and teaching methodology. In this sense, Nepal’s case seemed mixed with pedagogical and non-pedagogical (literary) contents, in contrast with Korean IETE curricula that focused mainly on pedagogical and professional subject matter contents. This may be partly due to the fact that in Korea, there has been a separate, non-teaching discipline called English and Literature.

Context Knowledge

Anthropological and ethnographic studies have highlighted that teachers’ knowledge is jointly constituted by their actions and the context in which they operate (Tsui, 2012). In this sense, context becomes an integral part of teacher knowledge, implying that the effectiveness of teacher expertise depends on teachers’ interaction with the context and their ability to construct or appropriate the methods to deal with and deliver the curricular contents in their respective contexts. The contexts are made up of social, institutional, and individual values that students come up with. Referring to Table 29.2, CtK consists of two domains: social factors and educational factors. Hedge (2001) discusses that the social factors, such as community perception about the target language and language teachers influence teachers’ instructional choices and pedagogical behavior in the educational institutions. On the other hand, Harmer (2008) discusses the contextual factors such as class size, mixed ability group, students’ L1 contributing to the success of teaching,

and suggests some practical tips such as good organization and conducting pair/group work to overcome the problems. Although these references provide highly generic techniques for dealing with the contextual factors, how teachers implement them in the respective classroom contexts requires teachers' ability to navigate through the contextual constraints. Contextualization of ELT has been emphasized in IETE curricula in some universities in Nepal (e.g. MWU offers a course on 'Nepalese English and Nepalese ELT') aiming to promote local Nepalese ELT discourses and practices prescribing a large portion of the course on studying Nepali literature translated into English, but it lacks the methodological dimension on contextualizing ELT. Meanwhile in Korea, the books (e.g. Im, 2007; Park, 2000) do not address the issue of context explicitly, but do so discussing trendy issues relating to ELT, e.g. the use of multimedia in class. A teacher, however, needs to understand the contextual changes and newly emerging student needs. For instance, the current COVID-19 pandemic situation has required teachers to quickly grasp the changes in schooling under the pandemic and create resources to continue schooling (Weible et al., 2020), and to develop their practical skills in ensuring equitable education for underprivileged students during the technology mediated language education (Choi & Chiu, 2021). The IETE in both contexts miss the very important, personalised linguistic context. The same linguistic context can be experienced very differently by students from different socio-economic background, for instance. While English is a foreign language for the majority of local students in both Korea and Nepal, those coming from affluent backgrounds have better home support to acquire the language, e.g. being sent to a private English medium school (Poudel & Choi, 2021) or to receive schooling in an English speaking country (Choi, 2021). Such differential contexts, in turn, affect learners' self-efficacy as a learner and member of the adult society after graduation (Choi, 2017a).

Self-knowledge

Teachers as individuals have a certain degree of understanding of themselves or their identity, situated within their institutions, and the wider professional society. That is, they develop self-awareness through interaction with the immediate workplace environment and interpretation of self-experiences (Korthagen, 2004). Knowledge of self as a person, as a manager of learning, member of the school community and as a member of the teaching profession are the four main aspects of SK. Every teacher has personal commitments and constraints which they need to understand before entering into teaching. In the case of IETE courses, how teachers themselves understand and move ahead with self-reflection, and how they maintain well-being and personal enrichment have not been emphasized. Beyond their personal growth and well-being, teachers contribute as a member of the institution in which they work, therefore are required an increased awareness of their position in relation to institutional ethics, professional conduct, and interaction within the institution. Such knowledge, which is also omitted in the IETE curricula of the two

contexts, directly influences teachers' self-efficacy, motivation, commitment to the profession, and job satisfaction and subsequently determines the effectiveness of teaching (Flores & Day, 2006).

In sum, the review of the IETE courses in the two countries revealed that the major section of the course offering provides specific attention to GPK and CK to develop teacher expertise. However, given the changing educational landscapes generated by the advancement in information and communication technologies (ICTs), the widening digital divide, and the sudden unprecedented need to shift to the blended or completely online modes of teaching due to the COVID-19 pandemic, pre-service teacher education courses that exclusively focus and rely on GPK and CK are insufficient. Their C_tK to appropriate the contextual affordances and navigate through challenges is essential, to ensure equal educational opportunities and learning conditions for all students, as well as the SK to guide their decision-making and care for their own well-being. However, these two areas of knowledge were not given due attention.

New Aspects of Teacher Expertise Required Under the Pandemic

The pandemic effects revealed that teachers now need new expertise for the sustainability of their professional practice. The changing educational landscapes further strengthen the understanding of teacher expertise as a dynamic process, in which teachers need to upgrade to meet the contextually and temporally changing roles and goals, including an understanding of self-well-being needs and socio-emotional skills. However, our review of the IETE curricula previous to the COVID-19 outbreak revealed that pre-service teachers are not trained for grasping the changing context, leading changes to cope with the changes while taking care of self-and student-well-being, let alone the fundamental hands-on skills of remote teaching. Therefore, such programmes are inadequate in preparing teachers for the current and any future crisis-induced challenges. Hence, reforming teacher education to make it compatible with the changing needs, such as new skills in embracing continuous and life-long learning and ICT-integrated learning is essential (Choi, 2020). Here we further discuss the difficulties and challenges experienced by teachers in the two contexts and suggest some ways out for the concerned stakeholders of teacher education to navigate through this crisis.

Challenges of Ensuring Equitable Quality Education

Cheung (2020) in her study in Hong Kong reported that teachers' pedagogical beliefs, contexts, and professional development factors influenced technology integration in remote teaching and suggested that process-oriented pedagogies

would contribute to teachers' professional development and effective technology integration in language classrooms. For those who have limited online learning experience themselves, self-awareness raising of their limited capacity as well as promotion of the continuous professional development customized to their needs (Choi, 2017b; Choi & Walker, 2018) would contribute to equipping the pre-service teachers to develop themselves and take risks to ensure equitable learning conditions for all students.

Once the teacher candidate is ready in terms of attitude, developing the skills involved, remains a challenge, especially conscious of the marginal groups of students and those from low-income families (see Choi & Chiu, 2021). Galperin et al. (2020) reported that teachers had insufficient training and technical support while migrating to remote/online teaching. For instance, some teachers in Korea faced technical limitations of digital tools used for remote learning (Chang, 2020). To ensure the quality and equity of remote learning, teachers should add new elements in their GPK in terms of "planning and preparation", "class atmosphere", "conducting a lesson", "evaluation of a lesson" and "professional development", and develop skills on designing contextual and self-generated strategies to handle any emergent situations. Here, we discuss these issues separately.

Planning and Preparation

When planning the syllabus, teachers should create a 'Plan B' for safe and effective learning delivery when traditional delivery models are disrupted or even when the remote learning systems do not provide reliable connectivity. They must be prepared for both the predictable and the unpredictable (Choi, 2020). When building pre-service teachers' ability to develop lessons, the ability to be versatile in converting the mode of delivery between face-to-face and remote learning can be included, such as developing repertoires of online activities and knowledge of applications to increase interaction and in-depth, collaborative learning. Awareness-raising for the specific needs of the marginalized learners, and the creation of customized measures when switching modes are also required. For instance, some teachers in Nepal adopted flexible teaching schedules such as teaching early in the morning to avoid high costs and unreliable Internet connections, considering the situation that only 37% of the students reported a reliable Internet connection outside of the capital (Gautam & Gautam, 2020).

Positive and Safe Class Atmosphere

Regarding the class atmosphere, teachers should support students' social and emotional well-being as well as the usual pastoral and affective care such as ensuring a safe learning environment and building rapport. Remote learning can

facilitate different modes of student participation with less concern about the loss of face (Macnaught & Yates, 2020). The commonly adopted interfaces such as Blackboard and Moodle, allow students to vote anonymously in the class polls and send concealed messages only to the teacher or specific classmates. Besides, teachers can create synchronous chat rooms or asynchronous online message forums so that students can also communicate outside of the class (Choi & Chiu, 2021), contributing to reducing the inequalities in classroom interaction and participation during remote teaching.

Conducting an Interactive Online Lesson

During the lesson delivered in a remote mode, teachers should encourage interaction and in-depth thinking. One of the ways to encourage interaction is to assign students to breakout rooms. Diversifying the modes of sharing views can contribute to making an online lesson more interactive and allows for equal participation (Choi & Chiu, 2021; Lim, 2020). Those less vocal and who have difficulties in articulating ideas in words may be more willing to share their views if invited to draw or upload images. Applications such as Mentimeter, Kahoot and Padlet allow for such interactions, and many other applications are continuously being added.

Teachers should also be ready to address contingencies such as internet disconnection and technical troubles. For teachers to develop such capabilities, the ITE programmes themselves should be conducted at least in part in an online mode, so that they experience possible contingencies themselves from the learners' perspective.

Evaluation of a Lesson

To ensure that all students benefit from the teaching and learning process, teachers need to self-evaluate and assess their classroom delivery and activities adopted during remote teaching. Evaluation of teaching in an online mode needs to allow for flexibility while maintaining accountability by acknowledging inevitableness of contingencies and providing formative feedback and support. Teacher educators can also suggest the trainee teachers to utilise students' online, interim evaluation of their lessons. A brief online survey, for instance, can help them to get immediate feedback and improve their pedagogical practice accordingly. Besides, during disruptions, teacher educators or senior management could provide adjusted guidance based on emerging local contextual realities and on feedback from teachers, which would make teachers feel supported.

Ways Forward

The sudden shift to remote teaching has not only prompted teachers to realize the lack in their professional expertise, self-beliefs, and actions but also to think about inequitable learning conditions that students are experiencing during the online synchronous mode of delivery. In that case, the requirements for teacher expertise are moving beyond the boundaries of traditional GPK and CK dimensions toward CtK and SK. This implies that teacher education programmes need to empower teachers to understand the learning contexts of the learners, their motivation, well-being, and abilities to establish equitable and just learning opportunities for all with such awareness. Our findings, echoing Tsui's (2009, 2012) conceptualization, reiterate teacher expertise as a process in which teacher knowledge and skills interact with the contexts of their workplaces and the institutions. Therefore, ITE needs to provide extended emphasis on the CtK and SK to develop resilience for unpredictable changes (also see UNESCO, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the inadequacies of the ITE curricula to address the inequalities and inequities and has signaled an urgency to reform ITE to prepare pre-service teachers for the unforeseeable future crisis impacting teaching and learning. One of the urgent interventions would be to train teachers to use available digital learning management systems and other digital resources for remote teaching and learning. These issues, including teachers' sudden increment of workload, engagement, and responsibilities, require the policymakers, educators, and other stakeholders (such as the governmental agencies, the non-governmental organizations, the donor agencies, teachers, and parents) to engage in a critical dialog to prepare the best possible intervention in ITE curricula in both Korea and Nepal to provide the prospective teachers with sufficient input to prepare for likely immediate and future challenges in education.

The pandemic provided an impetus to education systems to adopt remote learning, which they had been considering since the influx of new technologies and learning management systems. It has changed the overall architecture of language education and the conceptualization of the professional competencies and responsibilities of the teachers. This pandemic has also generated new avenues for multiple actors (such as teachers, administrators, and third parties including governmental and non-governmental organizations) to work together to reform ITE programmes from the bottom up (Choi, 2020; Dreesen et al., 2020) in preparing teachers to be crisis-proof.

The road to more open, equitable, and accessible pathways for all the students irrespective of their background in a context of crisis has been laid out in this chapter. Now is the time for policy designers, investors, donors, and managers to support teachers to incorporate such innovation in individual classrooms. To do that the development of contingency plans (e.g. building teachers' capacity to prepare for lessons during a pandemic; building teachers' capacity to cater to families' needs) would be worthwhile. Witnessing the new teaching and learning conditions, the IETE system needs to navigate modern ways of facilitating learning inside and

outside of the physical classrooms, collaborating with third parties to move ahead through the complex and widening digital divide among teachers working in different contexts. A coordinated effort among schools, government agencies, and technical service providers (such as third parties providing Internet and other technological services) would contribute to establishing reliable digitally mediated teaching, especially for times when resources would need to be created suddenly (Choi, 2020; Choi & Chiu, 2021). This will also minimize the inequitable learning conditions created by unequal distribution of resources and technology. Importantly, teacher educators should ensure that pedagogic development and technical training go hand-in-hand to enable teachers to discharge their professional responsibilities in difficult circumstances. Although several formal and informal training sessions for teachers have taken place during the pandemic (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2021), the goal of attaining quality and equitable learning for all will not be attained without reform in currently practiced TE curricula. Also, the reform in IETE curricula should ensure that it fully meets different stakeholders' needs, such as parents', students' and teachers' (*relevance*); every teacher and student has practical access to the technological devices (*feasibility*), and the technical laboratories are installed in teacher education institutions (*institutional infrastructure*), all of which are essential for enabling all teachers (including English language teachers) to face potential crisis-induced challenges and changes (see Choi, 2018 on how to assist change processes). Finally, teachers' and teacher educators' well-being needs to be considered in all change plans, as changes often incur emotional distresses especially during the pandemic situation.

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Chapter 30

Closing Thoughts



Rubina Khan, Ahmed Bashir, Bijoy Lal Basu, and Md. Elias Uddin

Abstract The concluding chapter discusses the common threads that link the six parts of the book together to form a cohesive whole. It also offers a number of insights drawn from the chapters. Finally, it provides future directions for teachers, researchers, policymakers, and ELT practitioners.

Keywords Local contexts · Glocal perspectives · Insights · English language education · Future directions

This edited volume, *Local Research and Glocal Perspectives in English Language Teaching: Teaching in Changing Times*, was undertaken at a time when the entire education system worldwide, including the field of English language teaching, was faced with the challenge of finding alternative ways and means of providing education. We were aware that while our contexts were different, there was a need to explore, collaborate, and learn together to identify challenges as well as opportunities in English language education for the benefit of students, teachers, and researchers. We aimed to offer our readers glocal perspectives on the constraints and possibilities facing professionals in English language teaching today. The chapters in this volume focus attention on practitioners' experiences, challenges, and opportunities related to ELT curriculum and materials, pedagogies, educational technology, assessment, and teacher development. Collectively, the chapters showcase ideas, concepts, and research insights into English language teaching and learning from a variety of contexts across the globe, with contributions by researchers located in diverse

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countries of the Global South and the Global North—Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Iran, Hong Kong, Nepal, South Korea, Japan, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States of America. Thus, the aim was to contribute to the ongoing dialogues between scholars, teachers, and teacher educators from both global and local contexts. The book presents studies that have examined well-researched as well as relatively less-explored areas in the field of English language education.

Interlinks Between the Chapters

The common thread running across all six parts in the present volume involves the exploration of current theories, concepts, principles, and practices in English language education in both local and global contexts. In Part I, the four chapters offer socio-cultural perspectives on English language education, particularly on the discourses of development in English language teaching in the Bangladesh context, the affordances that translanguaging provides vis-a-vis English-medium instruction, EFL/ESL learners' creative expressions in production in multilingual contexts, and the importance of incorporating local pedagogical traditions and scholarship in English language teacher education in the South Asian contexts. The six chapters in Part II deal with the prospects as well as challenges related to the development and implementation of curriculum and materials for ELT at kindergarten/primary, secondary and tertiary levels in different contexts. Part III explores the role and use of technology in English language teaching and learning in normal times as well as during and after the pandemic. The five chapters in Part IV are linked under the umbrella of current perspectives on ELT practices during the pandemic as well as post-pandemic times. The chapters in Part V shed light on a range of topics pertaining to second language assessment. Finally, the theme of teacher education is highlighted in the final section, Part VI.

The parts of the book represent different components of a language education curriculum including materials, teaching practices, assessment, and teacher education. The components work in a complementary relationship and not in isolation. Thus there are themes and subthemes in the book that run across the different parts. Although work for the book was mostly undertaken during the COVID-19 pandemic, the findings and discussions have implications for post-pandemic times. An approach we adopted was to include the voices of global ELT experts as well as local scholars in each part to facilitate the development of glocal perspectives on various issues discussed throughout the book.

Insights Gained

This volume has provided some insights into English language teaching and learning for both the pandemic and post-pandemic periods. One important insight relates to the value of integrating technological innovations. With the sudden outbreak of COVID-19 in early 2020 most educational institutions across the globe moved their traditional face-to-face classes online. Technological tools are indispensable in conducting online classes and examinations. It is expected that in a post-pandemic world, blended learning will become an integral part of English language education. A number of empirical studies in this edited volume exploring the use of digital tools and technology-enhanced language learning demonstrate their potential in promoting autonomous learning and collaboration through enhanced student engagement both inside and beyond the classroom. There is also a case for creating and using multi-modal materials involving visual, auditory, and textual modes in addition to traditional paper-based materials. There is research evidence indicating the way new technologies help reconfigure various modes before they can be used in teaching and learning (e.g. Crescenzi, Jewitt & Price, 2014; Jewitt, 2013; Kress, 2003). Together, the studies highlight the need for rejigging education policy incorporating technology in curriculum and materials, pedagogy, assessment, and teacher education in a post-pandemic world.

Another insight is the importance of being open and flexible in our approach to language education today. Scholars have emphasized the need for continual change and reform initiatives to keep pace with changing times (Hyland & Wong, 2013; Tarrayo, Paz & Gepila, 2021). A number of chapters highlight the need for the adaptation of curriculum, materials, and teacher education programmes to respond to unexpected changes in our environment including climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic. The curriculum of the future must include more than just proficiency in the four skills as the goal of language education. Our students must be trained to think critically and solve problems to become future leaders in the fight against future crises including climate change. With globalization, innovative ideas and concepts are becoming increasingly available and policymakers, materials writers, and educators are making attempts to incorporate new ideas. For example, the University Grants Commission of Bangladesh has instructed all higher education institutions to revise curricula to incorporate outcome-based education (Shahidullah, 2020).

A few chapters make a case for further assessment reform and suggest changes in policies and practices. Learning-oriented assessment (LOA) has become “the new trend in contemporary assessment reform, which is changing from test-based to learning-oriented” (Zeng, Huang, Yu & Chen, 2018, p. 221). A change of mindset is needed and assessment needs to be seen as a positive part of the learning process, and therefore LOA, which provides self-directed learning opportunities and engages learners in meaningful learning may be tried on a trial and error basis. The pandemic situation has added impetus to consider a paradigm shift in education. The chapters reveal the challenges involved in continual change as well as the possibilities that change initiatives may bring to different contexts. Institutions that are unable or

averse to change are in real danger of becoming irrelevant and will find it difficult to stay afloat in the highly competitive higher education sector today.

A further insight is the accentuated need for collaboration, conversation, interaction, and networking amongst teachers, researchers, and teacher educators both at the local and global levels. Increased collaboration amongst educators in the form of professional learning communities might lead to an increase in teachers' confidence and capacity for professional growth (Clark, 2001), self-efficacy (Puchner & Taylor, 2006), teaching effectiveness, and expertise (Graham, 2007; Hattie, 2015), and on student achievement (Dumay, Boonen & Van Damme, 2013; Lara-Alecio et al., 2012). Some chapters stress the importance of collaboration amongst teachers, teacher educators, materials writers, and experts. The problems faced in various local contexts call for transnational collaboration. A transnational and cross-border collaboration involving specialists and practitioners may prove a win-win situation for all parties concerned providing scaffolding in the process of developing local expertise while allowing experts to sharpen their insights into the day-to-day workings of theories, principles, and methods at the grassroots level. The findings of research carried out in one context might offer potential solutions to hurdles encountered by colleagues in other contexts, and hence dissemination of research findings is imperative for the ELT community. Strong networking might act as a catalyst for a transfer of solutions from one context to others. This will also help to accelerate the sustainable development drive amongst ELT partners.

One final insight drawn from the studies derives from the benefits of a synthesis of the local and the global as well as local-global partnerships in developing curriculum, materials, and effective teacher education programmes. Translanguaging pedagogy, which has gained much momentum in recent times, marks a paradigm shift in English education, hitherto largely driven by monolingual (English-only) ideologies, necessitating a reconsideration of the place and role of the learners' mother tongue as well as other languages in their repertoire in English language teaching and learning. There is research evidence in support of the positive effects of pedagogical translanguaging on the students' development of language awareness and valuing of home and school languages (Arteagoitia & Howard, 2015; Cenoz & Gorter, 2020; Lyster, Quiroga & Ballinger, 2013). A similar positive impact of translanguaging pedagogy in content classes in the Bangladesh context has been reported in Chap. 3. The need to explore the socio-cultural realities of specific contexts is argued to be critical in achieving the desired objectives of English language education. This would involve taking into consideration the significance of in-country local perceptions in terms of needs, cultures, multilingual scenarios, contextual constraints, and locally preferred pedagogical traditions. The local exigencies including the needs and aspirations of the learners have to be prioritized over externally-imposed models and priorities in order to achieve sustainable development.

Future Directions

The insights discussed above point to the need for initiatives for policy reform to ensure equal access to technology in post-pandemic times, affirm the mutually complementing roles of English and local languages and cultures in ELT practices and teacher education, introduce multimodal materials, align ELT with sustainable development goals, and facilitate a shift to LOA. Clear policy guidelines may clarify and support the role of local languages in teaching and learning English and allow educators and communities to take advantage of the benefits of translanguaging. Additionally, as we gradually recover from the COVID-19 pandemic phase, it is becoming increasingly clear that technology is going to play a pivotal role in post-pandemic education. Educational administrators will need to find ways to make sure that learners regardless of socio-economic background, geographic location, gender, and ethnicity have equal access to available resources. With the growing importance given to education for the sustainable development of developing countries, there is a need for major overhaul of the curriculum. ELT researchers, educational administrators, and educators need to find appropriate pathways to align English language education with the SDGs.

Experts in materials development need to train materials writers to be able to design appropriate materials for blended education. Given the potential benefits of multimodal materials, there is a need for resource allocation to develop such materials and incorporate them in teaching and assessment. In the field of assessment, developing assessment literacy of teachers covering the whole gamut of assessment-related activities starting from test design to stakeholder involvement and incorporating the feasible aspects of learning-oriented assessment should be considered a fundamental goal of assessment reform in current times.

The issues that emerge from the discussion and specific recommendations we have made above call for further research. To begin with, researchers may focus their attention on the teachers' and learners' ability to integrate technological tools in specific contexts. Studies should also be designed to assess the feasibility of change proposals before they are initiated. Research is also required to find teachers' and students' readiness to incorporate multimodal materials and learning-oriented assessment. Further research that can sensitively examine the value of local language and culture amidst the everyday pedagogical, social, economic, and structural contexts of English education in the Global South will do a service toward greater sustainability of ELT. Collaborative action research involving practitioners from Global South and North may be helpful in finding ways in which materials, tests, and teacher education may be overhauled to meet the challenges of our times. Building wider collaboration, networking, and engaging in bi-/multidirectional interactive dialogues amongst teachers and educators across borders will be a fruitful way forward to address issues that we face in specific contexts.

In this book, we have attempted to present the current ELT landscape, but we are aware that no single volume can offer a complete picture of this evolving field in these changing times. However, we are hopeful that the insights this book offers will

be of interest to the varied stakeholders of English language education, particularly in the Global South.

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Correction to: Economisation of the Secondary English Curriculum in Bangladesh



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Correction to:
**Chapter 6 in: R. Khan et al. (eds.), *Local Research
and Glocal Perspectives in English Language Teaching*,**
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-6458-9_6

The original version of Chapter 6 was inadvertently published with the introduced error 'sss' in the Abstract. The chapter has been updated.

The updated original version of this chapter can be found at
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-6458-9_6