EFL Teaching and Learning in the Rural Areas of Bangladesh: Addressing Obstacles to Teaching L2

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Abstract

English as a language is an essential tool in the negotiation of power and relationship at the interpersonal, social and the global level as well. The importance of learning English has increased significantly as a useful communication tool in the age of globalization. In the existing scenario, English language learning and teaching in the rural areas of Bangladesh has become a prime concern. This study aims to present the current English language education policy, language learning and teaching obstacles pertaining to the poorly equipped classroom, lack of trained language teachers, and inadequate use of technology and non-availability of learning materials in Bangladesh. To analyze and to find the solution to the language teaching and learning obstacles, the researcher employed both qualitative and quantitative methods. The research was carried out in ten rural colleges far from the capital city Dhaka. The population of this study was higher secondary level students in the academic year 2019-2020. The number of populations was 25 students from intermediate class and 10 teachers from same school and colleges, and data were collected through a questionnaire. The findings show that though CLT based English language curriculum has been operating at the higher secondary level in Bangladesh, most of the teachers are not familiar with CLT guidelines and CLT related activities. Besides this, there are some crucial factors which demand great attention to change the current scenario. As a result, there are inconsistencies between the stated objectives of Teaching English and the actual teaching techniques.

Keywords: CLT, technological innovation, global language, EFL teaching obstacles, lingua franca, GTM

1. Introduction

The world is undergoing a rapid change, thanks to the myriads of incredible scientific and technological innovations. Like every sphere of life, language learning and teaching is also subjected to changes that are replacing the old with the new, the traditional with the modern and the stereotype with the innovative. Exposed to the global culture and tradition, students are no longer contented with the old authoritarian language teaching models. Instead, they are becoming increasingly curious about the world, which is just at their fingertips. As a result, they do not want to be confined to the teacher-centered classroom where a teacher drags on the lecture, focusing on memorization and learning from rote. Instead, they are interested in such a well-equipped class that facilitates language teaching through interaction, collaboration and participation. Apart from learning the language, today's learners are trying to acquire cultural knowledge as a means to connect to others across the globe.

Under the influence of globalization, the whole world has turned into a single village where a common language requires to be widely used in every mode of communication, including trade and commerce. For a great variety of reasons, English has achieved the prestige of being the largest lingua-franca and a much-sought-after commodity. By the end of the twentieth century, English was widely used for international communication among the people who did not speak English as their Native language.

English has emerged as a global language for a number of factors such as - colonial history, economics, information exchange, travel and popular culture. In Bangladesh, English has become a monopoly of the educated elite who tend to educate their children in reputed English medium institutions while a vast majority of people are deprived of reaping the benefit of English as they cannot afford quality English education to their children. Ultimately, gaps are ever widening between the haves and the have-nots, resulting in the failure of the government initiative to provide quality education for all.

In Bangladesh, English was taught on Grammar-Translation Method (GTM) at the secondary level where students had to practise a lot of translations- from Bangla to English and retranslations- from English to Bangla. Actually, GTM put more emphasis on grammatical accuracy than on oral or verbal communication. However, the method failed to fulfil the expectation of the linguists and continued until 1996, giving place to - Communicative Language Teaching. CLT was introduced with the sole purpose of developing communicative competence among the learners through the natural, subconscious process. Later, CLT was revised in 2010 in line with the global demand though most teachers were not adequately trained following CLT guidelines.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is an approach to the teaching of second and foreign languages that emphasizes communication or interaction as both the means and the ultimate goal of learning a language. (Barman et al., 2014). It puts emphasis on developing four language skills. Considering the importance of English as a means of global communication, the country introduced Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). CLT approach involves four basic principles such as i) individual engagement ii) interactive co-operation iii) using four skills in a real-life situation and iv) learning by doing. Four

fundamental skills are taught in an integrated way in the CLT approach, and by practising these four skills with equal emphasis, the learners are expected to be proficient in English. However, only two skills are practised at our secondary level education. So, the CLT approach does not serve the purpose of achieving the goal.

As a monolingual nation, students are taught English just within the classroom, but outside the class, they hardly find any scope to use English for communication. Even at the school, the focus is given only on reading and writing, leaving two vital skills- listening and speaking- totally ignored over the years. Most teachers teach English by using the mother tongue Bangla in the class, while target language English should be used as a medium of instruction. As a result, our learners become good at grammar and written English but lag far behind in terms of oral communication.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The researcher has found that both EFL learners and teachers of the rural areas face obstacles to teaching and learning English. Most importantly, students face problem with listening and speaking due to lack of efficient teachers, shortage of well-graded materials and absence of technological tools. On the other hand, teachers experience difficulties teaching language for their limited access to practical teaching techniques, not being aware of CLT guidelines, insufficient knowledge of modern technology and inability to conduct multi-media classroom.

In the light of the background illustrated above, problem statement can be formulated as 'What are the obstacles to learning and teaching the English language encountered by both teachers and learners in the rural areas of Bangladesh?

1.2 Objective of the Study

The paper is designed to fulfil some specific objectives. They are as follows:

01. To view the exact scenario in the treatment of English language teaching in the rural areas of Bangladesh

02. To find out the problems in learning and teaching English for the development of teaching and learning strategy.

03. To set out the strategies and plans for overcoming difficulties.

1.3 Rationale of the Study

English language has largely taken the place of a globally oriented power and economy. (Coleman, 2010). The nations who could achieve the skills of using English properly could change their situation in a positive way. However, in the case of Bangladesh, the status of English Language teaching-learning is not very satisfactory. Both teachers and students face many challenges in the teaching-learning process of the English language though many studies on English language teaching and learning have been carried out in Bangladesh. Most of the studies focused on the teaching and learning English where teachers were a significant concern. Teaching proficiency, teaching challenges and using materials in English language

lessons were the core attention of those research (Sadek, Ahmed & Begum, 2006; Ahsan, 8 2009). Students had been neglected in most of the studies. The challenges or the opportunities students experience in the journey of the English language teaching-learning has not been explored yet. In these circumstances, the current study could be considered as a base of researching for both students' and teachers' challenges in teaching and learning L2. The findings of the study will help the learners, teachers, researchers, and policymakers to rethink their initiatives for excellence in teaching to revise their teaching practice focusing on students' needs.

1.4 Research Question

1.4.1 General Question

What are the obstacles encountered by both teachers and learners to teaching and learning L2 in the rural areas of Bangladesh?

1.4.2 Specific Questions

-What are the problems of EFL teaching in rural Bangladesh?

-What are the challenges of EFL learning in rural Bangladesh?

-What are the ways to overcome the difficulties of both EFL teaching and learning in rural Bangladesh?

2. Review of Literature

Zahra Akbari (2015) investigates problems with learning and teaching English as a foreign language. She states five types of problem those undergo with students, teachers, textbooks, teaching methods, language assessment and evaluation and finally political problem. It is now a challenge for the students, who are unable to use the English language outside the classroom for lack of suitable environment and the inability to use audio or visual learning tools. In contrast, teachers prepare the students only for examination instead of focusing on the overall language development of the learners. They do not concentrate on building the language ability of the learners. Problem of the textbook lies in the use of unattractive, dull, outdated and incoherent contents in the book and the lack of transparency in the general purpose of the book.

Shehdeh Fareh (2010) discusses a few issues that occur while teaching and learning English in the Arab world. He not only collects problems, but also makes recommendations. The problems incorporate lack of trained teacher and inadequate teaching methodology, teacher-centered activities rather than students –centered ones, students' talents, primary vigilance and motivation, lack of emphasis on developing skills, emphasis on rote learning, categorization vs. whole language approach, flaws in textbook and teaching materials and problem with assessment procedure. To address these issues, researcher suggests that only trained teachers be allowed to teach, learner-centered activities be created, and concrete goals for teaching English as a foreign language be established, among other things.

P. Sreenvasulu Reddy (2012) investigates some flaws in English language learning in India. He also makes several recommendations for addressing the flaws. The drawbacks include lack of exposure to the language, absence of consistent strategy, lack of qualified English teachers, and ineffective teaching methods. Again, the recommendations matched with the following issues that teaching practice be strengthened, teaching objectives and needs be balanced, and that basic concept clarification be brought.

Roshan Ali Teevno (2011) explores a few problems in his paper entitled "Challenges in teaching and learning English at Secondary level class X in Pakistan". The research findings include nearly half of all students polled agree that English is a subject to be passed rather than a language to be learned. Furthermore, teacher -centered classroom is a common picture of the English classroom in Pakistan.

Johnson (2001) in his study on the secondary English language teachers in Ukraine discovered that the qualified trained teachers are more effective in managing English classes than non-trained teachers. Teachers with a strong English medium experience are the best candidates to teach students how to learn a language. The researcher suggests that teachers should avoid taking narrow steps for teaching English by giving clues. He finds that only 29% teachers at high school level are trained up, while 71% teachers do not have any training in teaching.

The current researcher finds all relevance among aforesaid studies conducted by renowned scholars from around the world because all the studies investigate the status of teachers and learners in encountering problems to teach and learn language.

3. Research Design and Methodology

3.1 Research Setting

This study has been conducted by putting together both primary and secondary sources of data. Primary data has been collected from individuals and secondary data has been formulated from the census, articles, books and so on. The researcher has closely observed English language teaching (ELT) classrooms, discussed with teachers, students and educationists who shared their frank opinions regarding this issue. Existing higher secondary classrooms have been observed. A mix of both quantitative and qualitative methods were used in this study. The question might arise why researcher used a combination of these methods. Creswell (1994 p.177) suggests, that it is congenial for a researcher to combine methods to better understand a concept being tested or explored. Each approach has its strengths and its weaknesses, and the researcher thinks that reliance on anyone method is not appropriate. The collected data are used to evaluate the present situation of English language teaching and learning in Bangladesh.

3.2 Population and Sampling

The participants for this study were 25 learners and 10 teachers of English from higher secondary levels. All the teachers and learners involved in the study were non-native speakers

of English from ten non-government colleges of Bangladesh including Rajapur College, Narshingdhi Model College, Saheen Academy School and College, Darbesher Hat Alim Madrasah, Muktagacha Government College, Sonagaji Women College, Abdul Majid Government College etc. For the purpose of observing research ethics, the names of the participants were kept secret. These participants were asked to complete two different questionnaires.

3.3 Instrumentation

The mixed methodology helped to explain the EFL teachers' and learners' perceived difficulties in learning and teaching in the rural areas of Bangladesh with the help of the survey questionnaire, the difficulties and challenges that were not covered by the questionnaire were revealed.

3.3.1 Written Questionnaires

The written survey questionnaire used in this study was designed for both teachers and learners who are teaching and learning in public and/or private schools and colleges in rural area of Bangladesh. Questionnaires were given to the 35 participants to explore the problems that exist in rural Bangladesh, as well as to investigate their understanding of the possibilities of overcoming these problems. It involves a list of open-ended questions addressing the various problems related to teaching and learning, and the solution to it in EFL contexts, particularly in the rural Bangladesh.

3.4 Data Collection Procedure

The participants for this study were 25 students and 10 teachers of English language at higher secondary levels. These participants were asked to complete the questionnaire, and four teachers were asked to participate in the succeeding interview. Out of these 35 participants, 20 of them were male, and the rest 15 were female. In case of age range, most of the respondents from learners was 17 to 20 years old and from teachers were 30 to 55 years old. According to the teaching experience, it varies from 10 to 25 years at different schools and colleges. As far as the schools/colleges information is concerned, 10 participants were working at private/Non-government schools and colleges. Few teachers hold a Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree from different universities along with Bachelor of Education (B Ed). The other teachers were either Master of Arts (MA) or Master of Education (M.Ed.).

3.5 Data Analysis

The questionnaire data analysis included the analysis of closed-ended questions. The statistical analysis was used to examine the closed-ended questions. The descriptive central tendency statistics were created using frequency measurements (i.e., how many teachers and learners selected each answer) and were used to present an overall image of EFL teaching and learning in rural Bangladesh. They find difficulties and problems that they face in their attempts to achieve success in English classrooms. However, we took quite something to analyze the data and come to a conclusion.

4. Results

4.1 EFL Learning Obstacles at the Rural Areas

4.1.1 Not Well-Equipped Classroom

In Bangladesh, most of the classrooms consist of over 100 students and it is next to impossible for a teacher to enhance the English skill of the students within stipulated 35/40 minutes for each class. Poorly furnished classroom, lack of academic aids, traditional teaching method and the lack of an effective assessment system pose barriers to the teaching of English. The researchers jot down all the questions to have the results on every single issue.

I find it difficult to understand teachers instruction due to large classroom

Figure 1. Difficult to Understand Teachers' Instruction due to Large Classroom

The researchers asked the learners whether the large classroom with hundred more students is a problem or not for learning English language. The pie chart showed us 48% of respondents strongly agreed and gave practical opinion according to them, the large class was always a problem and 40% of them agreed with the statement whereas, only 8% respondents disagreed with the statement that they don't face difficulties caused by large classroom. 4% learners were neutral.

**POORLY FURNISHED CLASSROOM MAKES ME
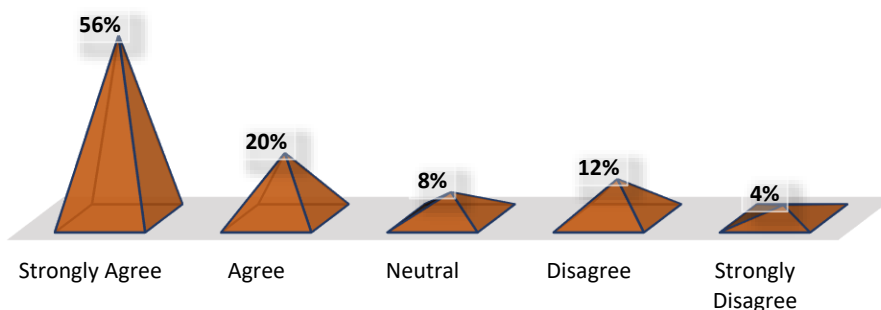DEMOTIVATED IN LANGUAGE LEARNING**

Figure 2. Poorly Furnished Classroom Makes Learners Demotivated

Motivation is one of the most crucial aspects in natural language acquisition. When the learners appear in the poorly furnished classroom, it makes them demotivated. The researchers wanted to know how the poorly furnished classroom affect learners in language learning. 56% respondent strongly agreed with the statement that the poorly furnished classroom makes them demotivated. Subsequently, 20% respondents agreed with the statement whereas 12% respondents disagreed that they never face difficulties in learning language due to the poorly furnished classroom.

**30 to 40 minutes classroom instruction is not
sufficient in natural language acquisition**

Figure 3. 30 to 40 Minutes Classroom Instruction Isn't Sufficient

Natural language acquisition requires a lot of time and efforts. The study shows that 48% respondents strongly agreed with the statement that 30-40 minutes classroom instruction is not sufficient in natural language acquisition. While 24% students agreed to the statement, 12%

respondents have shown disagreement with the statement.   On the other hand, 12% learners remain neutral in their response.

**I Lose My Concentration When Hundreds
Create Noises Inside & Outside the Classroom
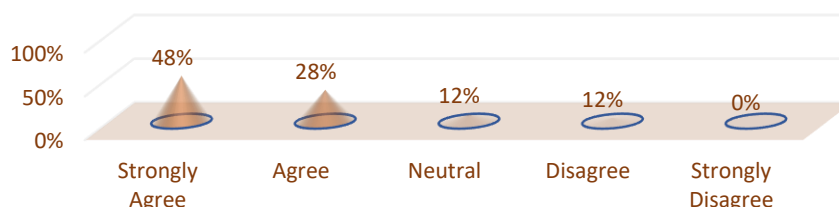During the Classroom Instruction**

Figure 4. Losing Concentration due to the Noises of Large Chunk Students

Noise affects the concentration of the students in varying degrees. In reply to the researchers, 48% respondents strongly agreed that noise badly affects their concentration to the learning process and 28% students agree to the statement. Only 12% respondents remain neutral in their response while the same percent of learners disagreed to the statement. No respondent is found showing disapproving of the statement strongly.

**Less Use of Multimedia Equipment Compelled
Me To Be Passive Learners**

Figure 5. Being Passive Learners due to the Least Use of Multimedia Equipment

Multimedia plays a great role in ensuring concentration of the learners. In contrast, less use of multimedia equipment compelled students to be passive learners. The chart demonstrates that 52 % respondents strongly agree that multimedia plays a great role in ensuring concentration of the learners. However, 36 % agreed to the statement. In contrast, 8% respondents refrain from giving their opinion while 4 % disagreed to the statement.

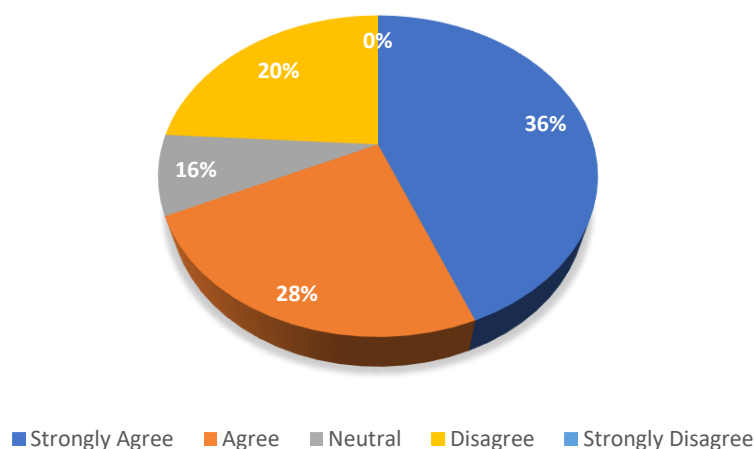**Classroom Practice is Authoritative not Interactive**

Figure 6. Authoritative Classroom Practice

Interactive classroom is thought to be more effective than authoritative. The pie chart shows that 36% respondents strongly agree to the statement while 28% agree to the perception. While 20% respondents show disagreement to the statement, 16% remain neutral in their responses. The problems can be overcome by introducing digital classroom, effective materials, assignment, presentation and group work in line with the education system of the advanced nations.

4.1.2 Academic Materials

National Curriculum & Textbook Board (NCTB) provides materials for the students ranging from elementary level to grade XII. However, the materials are not subjected to timely revision as there are bureaucratic complexities associated with the entire process. As a result, the materials fail to meet the growing demand of the current world. In fact, class consists of students of different levels- different in terms of talent, maturity, age and aptitude. Teachers as a facilitator need to address the individual problems of each and every student and enable them to be self-dependent. They have to ensure learners' autonomy so that learners can derive information themselves from diverse sources and branches of knowledge.

**Academic Textbooks Provided by NCTB are Difficult
to Understand at my Level of Studies**

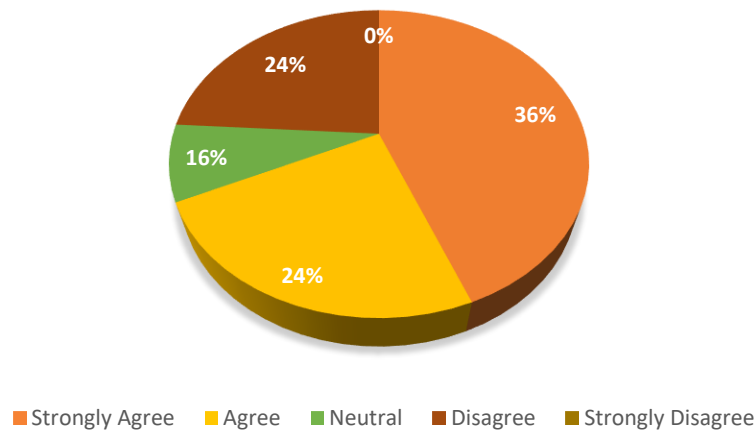Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Neutral ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

Figure 7. Academic Textbooks Are Too Difficult in Comparison to Level of Study

Academic textbooks are the main source of learning for the students. So, they should be designed and prescribed in line with the level of understanding and comprehension of the learners. When asked by the researchers whether academic textbooks provided by NCTB are difficult to understand, 36% students strongly agree that they find textbooks rather too difficult to understand. However, 24% respondents disagree to the statement, saying that the textbooks are suitable for them. 24% respondents agree that the textbooks are found a little bit difficult for them. 16% respondents remain neutral in their response.

**TEACHERS DO NOT PROVIDE
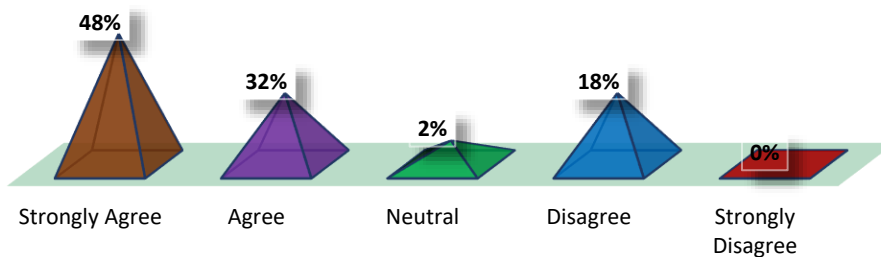SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS BESIDES
TEXTBOOK**

Figure 8. Lack of Supplementary Materials Provided to Students

Supplementary materials are very important for the better understanding and comprehension of the textbook. In reply to the question if supplementary materials are provided by teacher except textbook, 48 % students strongly agree that they are not provided any supplementary materials in addition to the textbooks. However, 32% respondents agree to the statement while 2 % students did not make any reply whereas 18 % students disagreed, saying that teachers provide supplementary materials along with their textbooks.

The materials are not revised in time due to the bureaucratic complexities associated with the entire process

Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree

Figure 9. The Materials Are Not Revised in Time due to the Bureaucratic Complexities Associated

Academic materials should be subjected to revision to meet the growing demand of time. The pie chart shows that 44% respondents strongly agree that the materials are not revised in time due to bureaucratic complexities associated with the entire process. However, 8% students remain neutral in their response to the statement while 28% students agree to the statement. In contrast, 24% respondents also have disagreed to the statement.

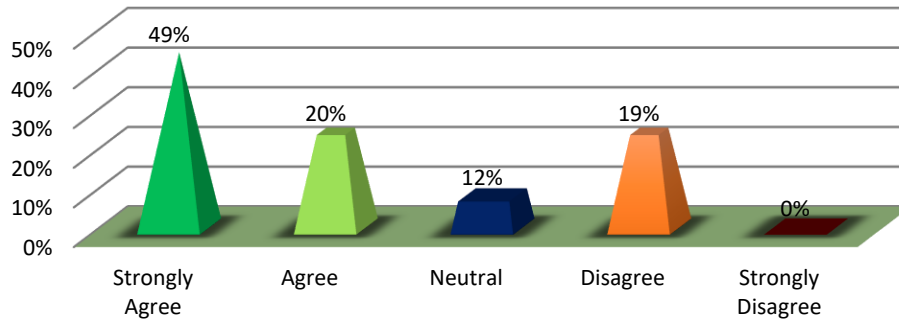**My language teacher plays an authoritative role rather than a facilitator**

Figure 10. Teacher Plays an Authoritative Role Rather than a Facilitator

Many teachers play an authoritative role in their classroom rather than being a facilitator. In reply to a question whether the teacher is playing an authoritative role, 49% respondents agree that their teachers play an authoritative role in their classroom while 20% students strongly agree to the statement. In contrast, 19% learners disagreed to the statement whereas 12% respondents remain neutral in their response.

I cannot share my textbook-related problems with teacher frankly
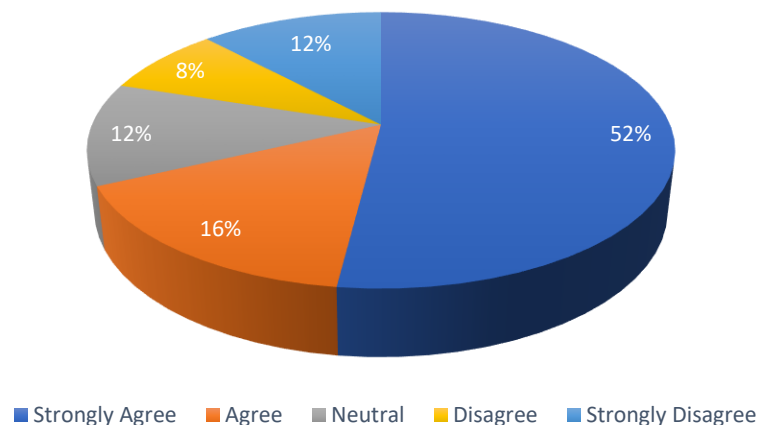

Figure 11. Sharing Textbook-Related Problems with Teachers

Classroom situations often require the learners to share textbook related problems with the teachers. The pie chart demonstrates that 52% students cannot share their textbook related problems with the teachers frankly. The reason may be that they suffer from shyness or not

feeling free with the teachers. However, 16% students agree to the statement. In contrast, 12 % learners remain neutral while the same percentage of students strongly disagree to the statement. On the contrary, 8% learners showed disagreement to the statement.

4.1.3 The Absence of Trained Teacher

In English language teaching, teachers have to play a multi-dimensional role. A teacher needs to portray real life situation in the classroom and provide adequate support to learners as a controller, prompter, participant, and resource tutor and feedback provider in order to identify the students' problems. A teacher also has to vary his techniques to suit the individual problems of learners.

In Bangladesh, teachers have academic qualification and training but do not have a strong background in English. Teachers correct the mistakes in writing but fail to provide any constructive comments for further improvement of learning. Moreover, they are traditionally good at grammar and are not interested in the development of ideas in language. Even after learning English for 10-12 years, students cannot make effective communication in English nor can they understand the native speakers. This is because tests are taken on only two skills- reading and writing but the other two skills are left out of the test. Teachers only put emphasis on the grammar and do not involve students in pair work or group work nor do they take class on developing listening skill.

My language teacher doesn't create the real-life situation to facilitate learning
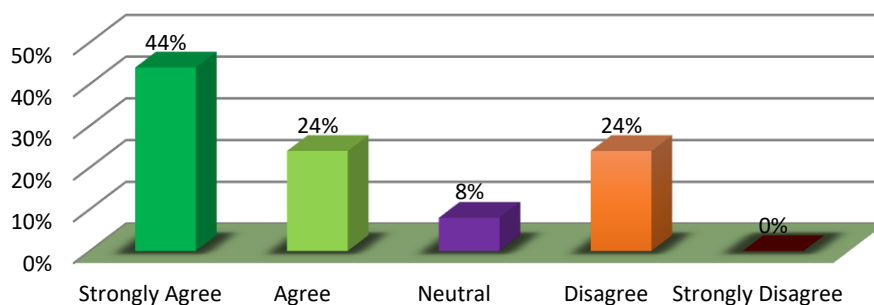

Figure 12. Facilitating Language Learning without Creating Real Life Situation

Language teachers need to create the real-life situation to facilitate learning. The chart demonstrate that 44 % students agree to the statement that their language teacher do not create the real-life situations to facilitate learning. In contrast, 24 % students agree to the statement while 24 % respondents disagree to the statement, saying that their language teachers cannot create real life situation in the classroom. On the contrary, 8% students did not give any response.

My language teacher plays a role as controller, not as resource tutor

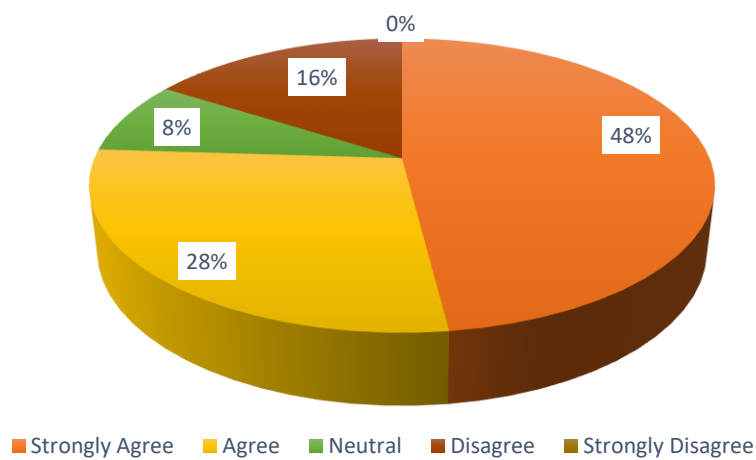Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Neutral ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

Figure 13. Language Teacher Plays Role as a Controller, not as a Resource Tutor

Language teacher should play role as a resource tutor. The pie chart shows that 48% students strongly agree to the statement that their language teacher play a role as a controller, not as resource tutor. However, 28% students agree to the statement while 16 % students show disagreement to the statement. In contrast, 8% respondents remain neutral.

The Teachers Conduct Full Class in L1 Bengali Rather in L2 English
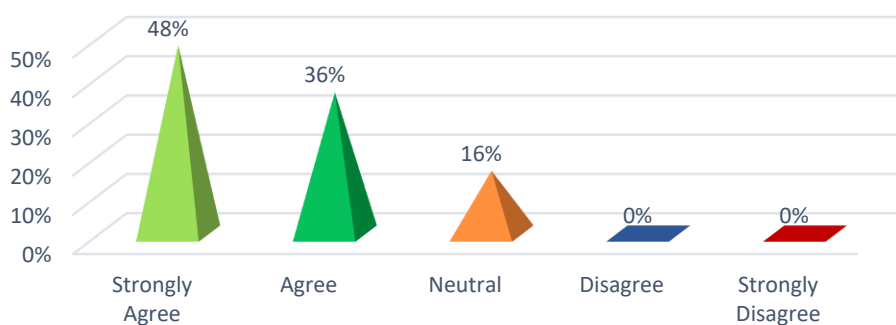

Figure 14. Conducting Class in L1 Rather L2

Natural language learning requires the teacher to conduct class in L2. The column chart shows that 48% respondents strongly agree to the statement that the teacher conducts full class in L1 (Bangla) rather in L2 (English). However, 36% students agree to the statement

while 16% students remain neutral in their responses.

**As a Learner of the Rural Area, I Couldn't Find Resourceful
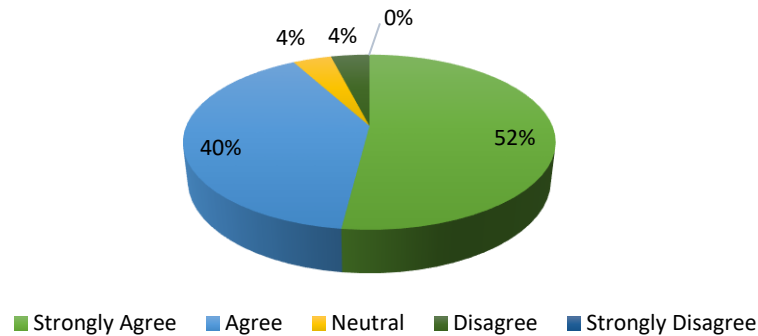EFL Language Facilitator Inside and Outside the Classroom**

Figure 15. Lack of Resourceful EFL Language Facilitator Inside and Outside the Classroom

Resourceful EFL language facilitators play a very important role in EFL teaching. However, in the rural Bangladesh, it is very difficult to employ a proficient language facilitator due to financial constraint. The researchers have found that 52% respondents strongly agree that resourceful EFL language facilitators are hardly available in the rural areas. However, 40% students agree to the statement. In contrast, only 4% students gave negative opinion while 4% respondents remained neutral.

4.1.4 Demands of Learners

Each and every learner is unique with regards to their needs and demands. Thus, same academic materials are not suitable for all of them, but teachers have to use the same procedure in the classroom. Students need textbooks with the improved selection and gradation of vocabulary, good printing, suitable subject-matter, exercise and glossary as well as the relevant stories so that learners can easily be acquainted with the culture and tradition of the target of language.

I need textbooks with the improved selection and gradation of vocabulary, good printing, suitable subject-matter, exercise and glossary as well as the relevant stories so that I can get more benefits from learning
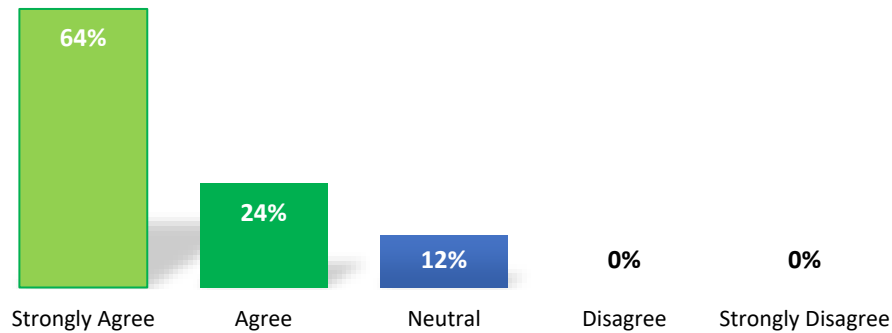

Figure 16. Required Textbooks with the Improved Selection and Gradation of Subject-Matter

Textbooks with the improved selection and gradation of vocabulary, good printing, suitable subject-matter, exercise and glossary are the key to second language learning. In reply to the question of the researchers if they need textbooks with improved selection and gradation of language elements, 64% students strongly agreed to the statement. However, 24% students agreed that they need textbooks with improved selection. The rest of the 12 % students remained neutral.

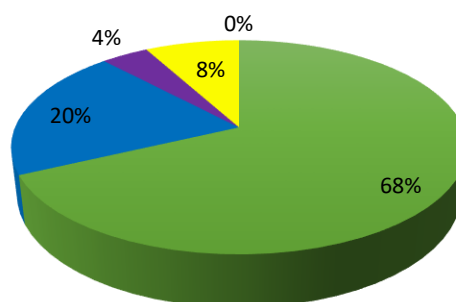**Digital & Multimedia Classroom Practice is Needed for Learning the Language by Visual Aids**

Figure 17. Digital & Multimedia Classroom Practice

Digital and multimedia classroom practice can ensure effective and interactive language learning. In reply to the query of the researchers, 68% students strongly agreed that digital

and multimedia classroom are effective for second language learning. However, 20% students have agreed that they could learn second language more effectively if they are provided with digital classroom facilities. While 8% percent students disagreed to the statement, 4% students remained neutral in their responses.

4.2 EFL Teaching Obstacles at the Rural Areas

4.2.1 Imported Methods

Our learners are taught English on the borrowed methods, most of which have been developed by the experts of English-speaking countries. The renowned methodologies of English language teaching are GTM, Direct Method, Audiolingual, PPP (Presentation, Practice and Production), CLT (Communicative Language Teaching), TBL (Task-based Learning) and TPR (Total Physical Response). However, most of the methodologies have failed to meet the growing demand of teaching English in Bangladesh. In fact, absence of ideal classroom, lack of trained teachers, lack of infrastructure and socio-economic factors are also responsible for the problem.

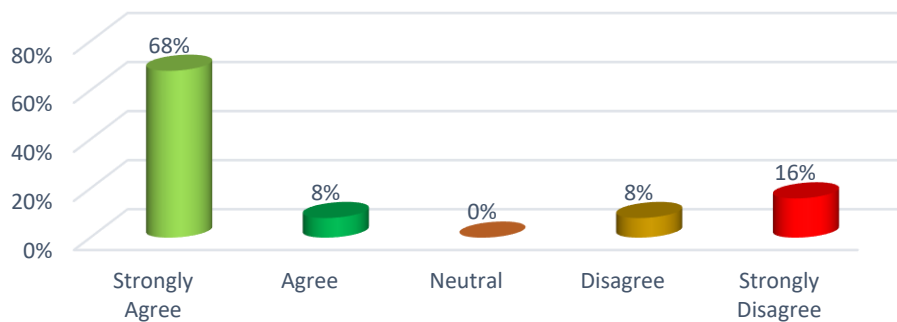**I Teach English on the Borrowed Methods and So Students Cannot Learn the Language Properly**

Figure 18. Teaching English on the Borrowed Method

Most teachers teach English on the borrowed methods. The column chart shows that 66% respondents strongly agreed that teachers use borrowed methods for language teaching. However, 8% respondents agreed to the statement while the same percentage of respondents disagree to the statement. In contrast, 16% respondents strongly disagreed to the statement.

Most of the Methodologies Have Failed to Meet the Growing Demand for Teaching English in Rural Bangladesh Due to Teachers Inertia In Using Methodologies
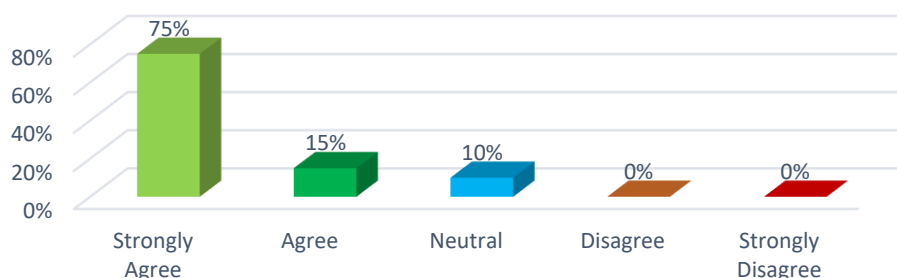

Figure 19. Most of the Methodologies Have Failed to Meet the Growing Demand for Teaching English as Teachers Inertia on That

Different methodologies have been used for language teaching. Not all that all the methodologies are equally effective for all learners. The above chart shows that 75% respondents strongly agreed that most of the methodologies have failed to meet the growing demand for language teaching in Bangladesh. In lined, 15 % respondents have agreed to the statement. On the contrary, 10% respondents do not comply with the statement.

4.2.2 Exam Oriented Teaching Pattern:

Our students are used to the examination-oriented teaching patterns which in reality have almost no practical impact upon them. Teachers complete the syllabus in a great hurry and prepare the learners for the test properly. Questions are set on multiple-choice questions from the passage, dialogue writing, cloze test, re-arranging, paragraph, letter and essay writing. Comprehension type of questions is easy enough for the learners to answer because students just copy the answer from the passage without understanding the text fully. Apart from this, students memorize a number of letters, paragraphs and essays which are very common and frequently set in board exams of previous years. The existing exam system is based on memorization and reproduction in that students just learn something by rote and reproduce them onto their exam scripts. Examinations do not assess the overall language competence of the learners because competence is measured only by a single skill, the written test. If speaking and listening module are included in the test, students will be able to communicate more effectively and efficiently.

**I am Used to the Examination Oriented Teaching
Patterns which in Reality Have Almost No Practical
Impact Upon Learners**

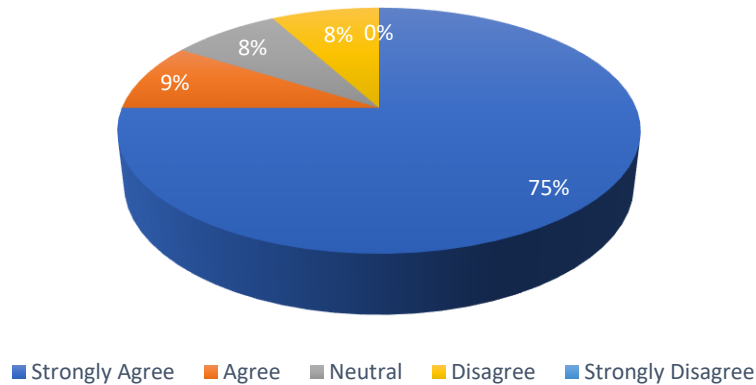Legend: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree

Figure 20. Teachers Used to the Examination Oriented Teaching Pattern

Teaching patterns are basically exam-oriented in most cases. The pie chart shows that 75% respondents have strongly agreed that most teachers adopt teaching patterns which are solely based on exams. However, 9% respondents have agreed that teachers focus on the exams at the time of delivering lectures. In contrast, 8% respondents disagreed to the statement. On the contrary, 8% respondents remained neutral in their response.

**I Complete the Syllabus in a Great Hurry and Prepare
the Learners for the Test Properly**

Legend: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
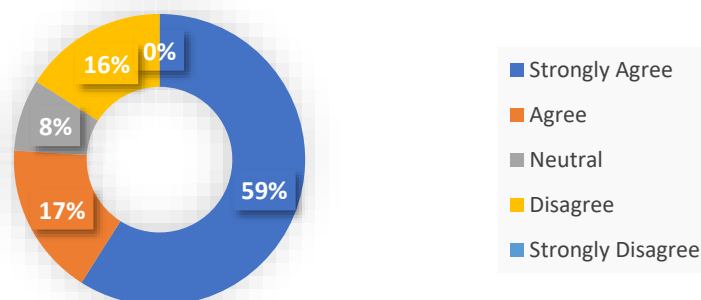
Figure 21. Completing Syllabus in a Great Hurry to Prepare Students for the Test Properly

Most teachers are in a great hurry to prepare the learners for the test. The pie chart shows that 59% respondents strongly agreed that teachers prepared the learners hurriedly for the test. However, 17% respondents just agreed to the statement. In contrast, 16% respondents disagreed to the statement. On the contrary, 8% respondents gave no opinion about the query.

I Set Most of the Exam Questions for Multiple-Choice from the Texual Passage, Dialogue Writing, Cloze Test, Re-arranging, Paragraph, Letter & Essay Writing
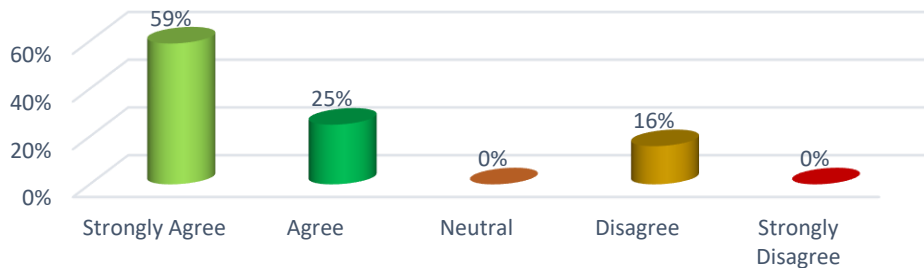

Figure 22. Teachers Often Set Most of the Questions from the Textual Passage

Teachers often set most of the questions from the textual passage. The chart demonstrates that 59% respondents strongly agreed that the majority of the question items are set from the textbooks. Again, 25% respondents agree to the statement. In contrast, 16% respondents did not agree to the statement. Rather, they opined that most questions are formulated from outside sources.

I Encourage students to go through a number of letters, paragraphs, and essays which are very common and frequently set in board exams of previous years and so the learners cannot acquire language naturally
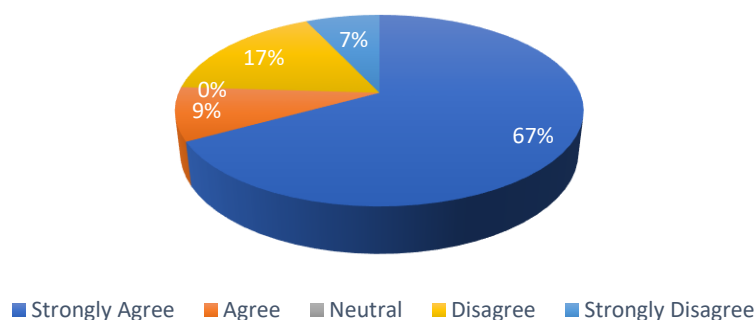

Figure 23. Teachers Often Encourage Learners to Memorise Writing Topics

Teachers often encourage learners to memorise writing topics. The pie chart shows that 67% respondents strongly agreed that teachers motivate learners to memorise some paragraph, letter, applications and even compositions. Again, 9% respondents agree to the statement. In

contrast, 17% respondents did not agree to the statement that students are encouraged to memorise the writing topics of the examination. Again, 7% respondents strongly disagreed to the statement.

I Think that Examinations Do Not Asses the Overall Language Competence Because Competence is Measured Only by a Single Skill the Written Test
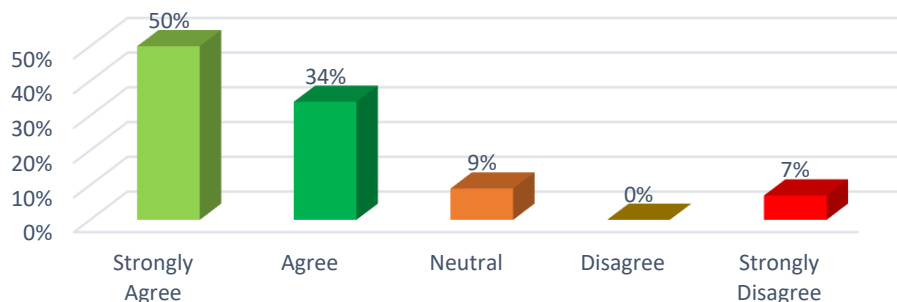

Figure 24. Competence of the Learners Cannot Be Measured Only by a Single Skill, the Written Test

Teachers believe that overall language competence of the learners cannot be measured only by a single skill, the written test. The column chart shows that 50% respondents strongly agreed that the overall language proficiency of the learners cannot be assessed just by taking a single module, written test. Again, 34% respondents just agreed to the statement. In contrast, 7% respondents strongly disagreed to the statement. On the other hand, 9% respondents did not give their opinion.

4.2.3 Failure in the Implementation of CLT

According to Nunan (1992), CLT (Communicative Language Teaching) is the most suitable approach to second and foreign language learning in Bangladesh. This approach is based on real situation. Learners can learn the language through social interaction with each other and it makes them socially and linguistically competent. CLT was first introduced at the secondary level and the textbook "English for Today'' was revised according to CLT format. It was also implemented at the higher secondary level education in 2001. Though CLT was put into practice in the Bangladeshi education system, it remains unsuccessful as per the reports from local ELT practitioners (Hamid and Baldauf 16). CLT did not come out successful because of the lack of trained teachers because they cannot follow CLT properly and have little opportunity to develop and update their linguistic and teaching skills. Teachers at the primary and secondary level are less competent in the four English language skills and that is why, they do not use the English language as a medium of instruction for English classes. There are other noticeable matters as well. The teachers are confused about the

constituents of communicative activities in the classroom. There are also some constraints that make CLT ineffective in Bangladesh. Some expert says that lack of vocabulary, indisposed usage of English both inside and outside of the classroom, lack of cooperative learning, economic constraints, size of classroom, administrative setup, and cultural conflicts. The English language learning and teaching system in Bangladesh remains disappointing to all. The low standard of English in the country has always been a matter of concern to all language learners and teachers. The progress is remarkable in terms of economy and education since the birth of the country. The people of Bangladesh can improve the way of teaching and learning that they used to.

**CLT Approach Mostly Failed to Improve Language Skills
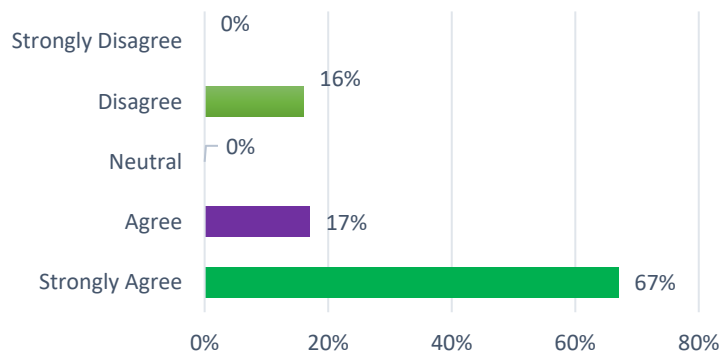Due to the absence of Trained Facilitators in Respective
Methods**

Figure 25. CLT Approach Mostly Fails for Lack of Trained Teachers

CLT requires trained facilitators and so CLT approach mostly fails for lack of trained teachers. The above chart demonstrates that 67% respondents strongly agree that learners cannot get benefit from CLT approach unless they are assisted by a trained facilitator. Again, 17% respondents just agree to the statement. In contrast, 16% respondents strongly disagreed to the statement that CLT calls for an efficient facilitator to help learners develop communication skills.

I Cannot Follow CLT Properly and Have Little Opportunity to Develop & Update My Language Teaching Skills
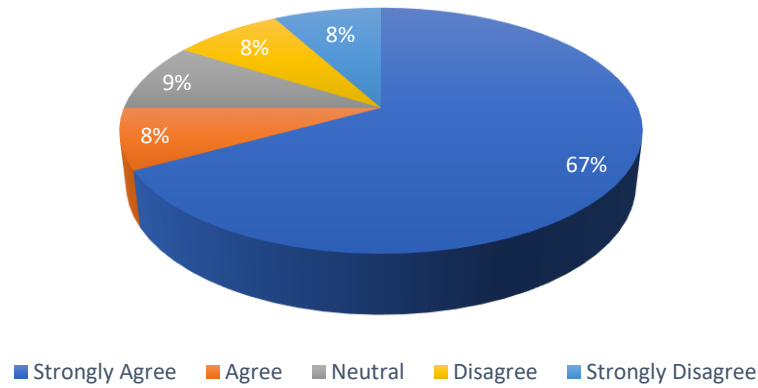

Figure 26. Teachers Cannot Follow CLT Properly and Have Little Opportunity to Develop and Update Language Teaching Skills

Teachers cannot follow CLT properly and have little opportunity to develop and update linguistic and teaching skills. The pie chart shows that 67% respondents strongly agree that they cannot follow CLT properly and have little opportunity to develop and update linguistic and teaching skills. Again, 8% respondents agree to the statement while 8 % respondents did not agree to the statement. In contrast, 8% respondents strongly disagreed to the statement while 9% respondents remained neutral.

Teachers at the Primary & Secondary Level are Less Competent in the Four English Language Skills and That's Why They Do Not Use English as a Medium of Instruction
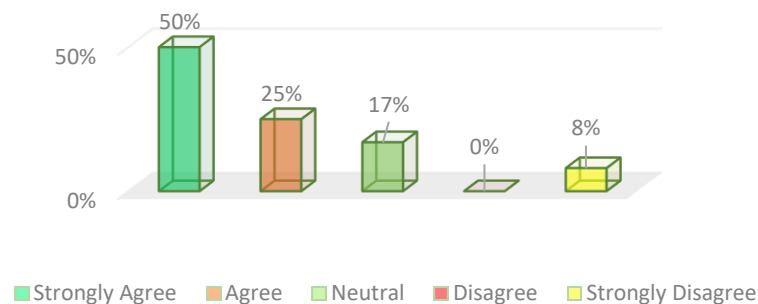

Figure 27. Teachers Are not Equally Competent in the Four Language Skills

Four language skills are the key to English language learning and teaching. However, teachers at the primary and secondary level are less competent in the four skills. The column chart shows that 50% respondents strongly agree that teachers, mostly at primary and

secondary level are less competent in four language skills. However, 25% respondents agreed to the statement. In contrast, 17% respondents remained neutral 8% strongly showed disagreement with the statement.

I am Confused about the Constituents of Interactive Activities in the Classroom

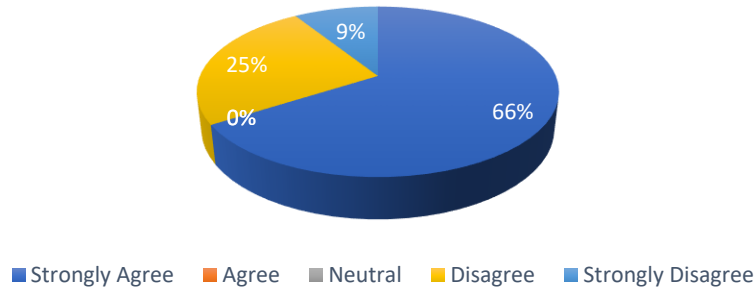Legend: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree

Figure 28. Teachers are Confused about the Constituents of Interactive Activities in the Classroom

Teachers are supposed to be aware of the constituents of communicative activities in the classroom. The pie chart shows that 66% respondents strongly agree that they are confused about the constituents of communicative activities in the classroom. In contrast, 25% respondents disagree to the statement that teachers are confused about the constituents of communicative activities. Again, 9% respondents strongly disagree to the statement.

Most of the Languge Teachers' Training Does Not Match the Demands of Rural Language Learners

Legend: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree
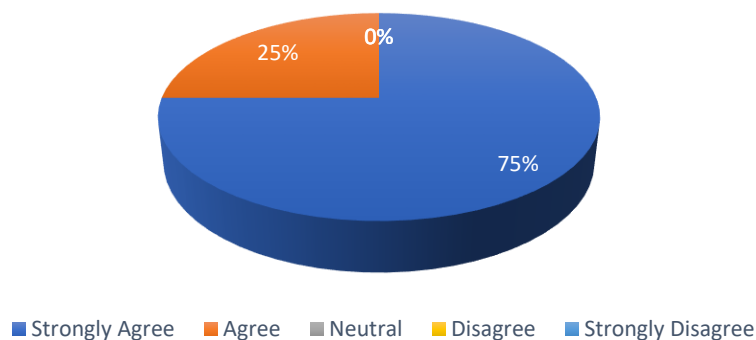
Figure 29. Teachers' Training Does Not Match the Demands of Rural Language Learners

Training is the key to the skill development of the teachers. The pie chart demonstrates that 75% respondents strongly agree to the statement that most of the language teachers' training does not match the demands of rural language learners. They hold that there is little scope for

the teachers to implement training outcome in language teaching. Again, 25% respondents agree that teachers cannot make the use of their training outcome in classroom situation.

I Cannot Apply the Acquired Training Among the Students Due to Their Less Exposure to Learning English Language
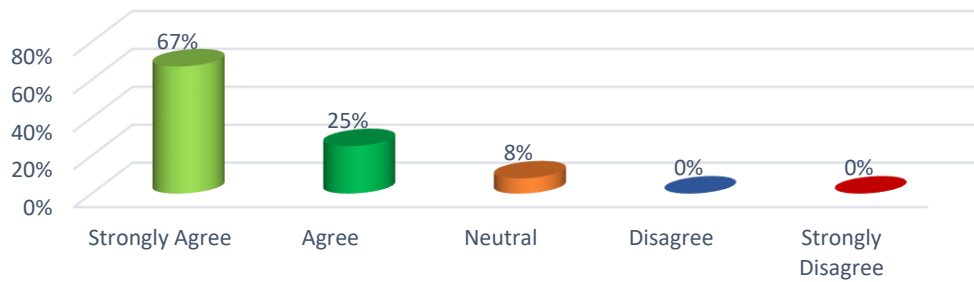

Figure 30. Teachers Cannot Apply the Acquired Training Among the Students Due to Their Less Exposure

Training is a very vital thing for language teaching activities. The column chart shows that 67% respondents strongly agree that they cannot apply the acquired training among the students due to their less exposure to learning English language. Again, 25 % respondents just agreed to the statement. In contrast, 8% respondents remained neutral in their response.

I cannot apply the acquired training among the students due to the shortage of modern language equipment
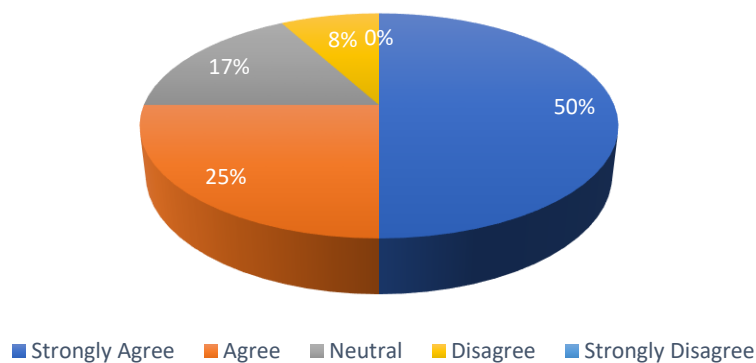

Figure 31. Teachers Cannot Apply the Acquired Training Among the Students Due to the Shortage of Modern Language Equipment

Modern language teaching equipment are very effective for language teaching activities. The pie chart shows that 50% respondents strongly agree that they cannot apply the acquired

training among the students due to shortage of modern language teaching equipment. Again, 25% respondents agreed to the statement. In contrast, 17% respondents remained neutral in their reaction while 8% respondents strongly disagreed to the statement.

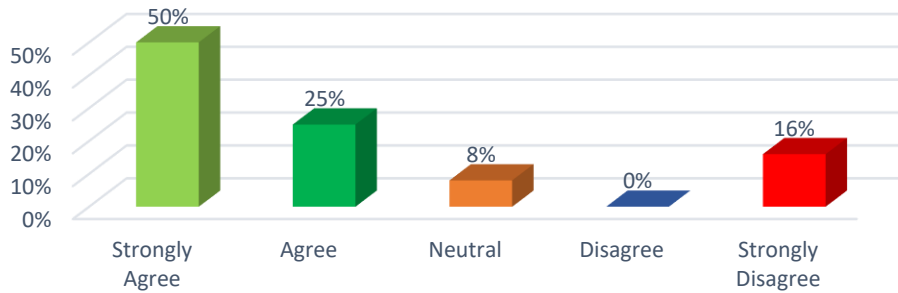**I Am Not Called for Training After Years**

Figure 32. Teachers Are Not Called for Training After Years

Training is the instrumental in shaping teaching skill into perfection. The column chart shows that 50% respondents strongly agree that teachers are not called for training years after years. Again, 25% respondents agree to the statement. In contrast, 16% respondents strongly disagree to the statement and expressed that they are called for training while 8% respondents remained neutral.

I Do Not Feel Interested in Training Due to the Far Distant Teachers Training Institute from the Rural Areas

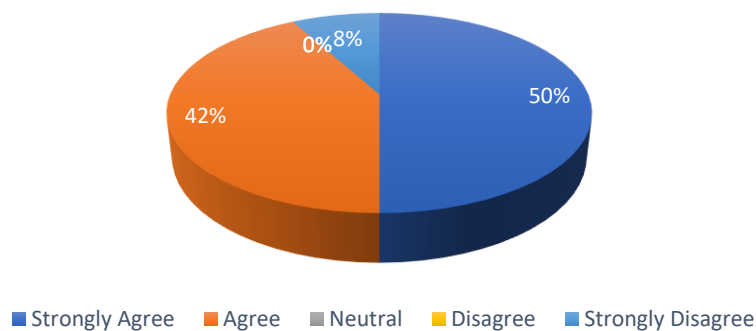**Figure 33.** Teachers Do Not Feel Interested in Training Due to the Far Distant Teachers Training Institute from the Rural Areas

Some teachers are averse to language teaching training due to some problems though training develops the skill and competence of the teachers. The pie chart shows that 50% respondents strongly agree that they are not interested in training due to the far distant training institute.

Again, 42% respondents agree to the statement. In contrast, 8% respondents strongly disagree to the statement that they do not feel interested in training due to the distance of the training institute.
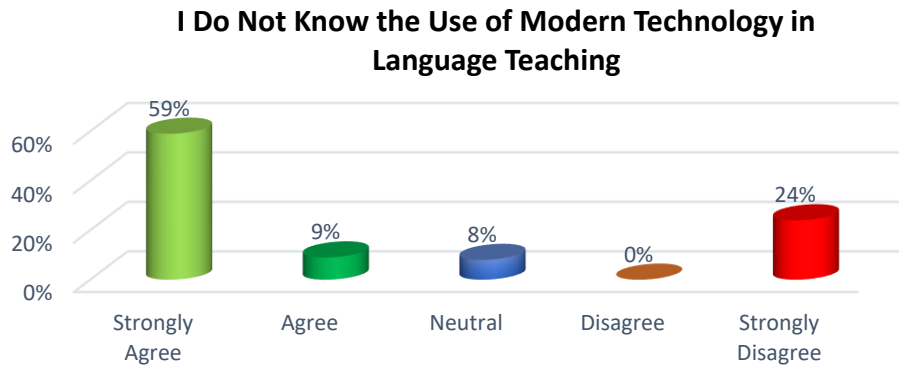
I Do Not Know the Use of Modern Technology in Language Teaching

Figure 34. Teachers Do Not Know the Use of Modern Technology in Language Teaching

Use of modern technology in language teaching is a pressing need of time. The column chart shows that 59% respondents strongly agree that they do not know the use of modern technology in language teaching. Again, 9% respondents agree to the statement. In contrast, 8% respondents disagree that they do not know the use of modern technology in language teaching. In contrast, 24 % respondents strongly disagree to the statement.

In Spite of Having the Knowledge of Modern Technology in Language Teaching, I Can't Show My Talent for lack of Equipment

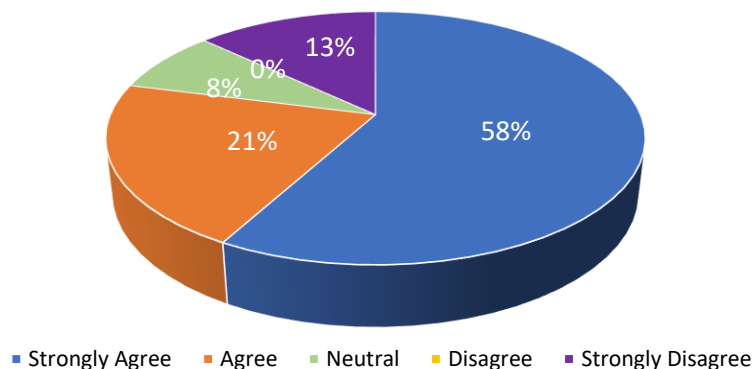■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Neutral ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

Figure 35. Lack of Technological Equipment

Modern technology in language teaching is instrumental in shaping language teaching into perfection. The pie chart shows that 58% respondents strongly agree to the statement that they cannot utilize their skill in modern technology in language teaching due to the shortage

of equipment. Again, 21 % respondents agree to the statement. In contrast, 8 % respondents remained neutral. On the contrary, 13% respondents strongly disagreed to the statement that they cannot utilize their knowledge of technology for lack of equipment.

5. Discussion

Looking closely at the data presented above, researchers find that the rural learners of Bangladesh experience myriad problems with practicing and learning English. First of all, EFL learners do not have well-equipped classrooms and learning-friendly environment for practicing speaking and listening. The learners, especially from the poverty-stricken areas are mostly confronted with difficulties for lack of modern language lab. Moreover, most rural institutions cannot impart quality language teaching to the learners as they fail to ensure well-furnished, technology- enriched multimedia classroom with digital and audio-visual aids due to financial and resource constraints. However, this can be better explained in a study carried out by Mirzaei Rizi et al. (2014), which identified the existing problems of teaching and learning English as a foreign/second language in the secondary schools of Iran and India. The results indicated that Indian students have an easy access to English audio-visual aids (e.g., listening or watching English TV news or programs). Hence, they are much better than their Iranian counterparts. This context matches the current scenario of rural Bangladesh where the access to technologies is shockingly limited. Most classrooms in the rural areas of Bangladesh are unusually crowded with large number of students. According to the study carried by Basir and Ferdousy (2006) having 45-91 students in a class can be considered as a large classroom. It can also be deemed as a jam-packed classroom (Sinha, 2001, p. 173). However, dealing with these large numbers of students in a classroom poses a big challenge to teach English as opined by many language teachers (Basir & Ferdousy, 2006). In fact, it is difficult for the trainers to assess the individual performance of the learners. Moreover, learners become demotivated and lose their zeal for learning when they do not find congenial environment for developing their desired language skills. This view has been supported by Akbari (2015, p.397). In this study, she observed that the overcrowding in the classrooms does not allow most of the students to get enough English practice, resulting in the poor performance of the learners. She also noted in her study that students would be unable to study English due to short duration of training. Again, non-availability of reading and writing materials also proves a great hurdle to language learning and learning. Teachers in rural Bangladesh use traditional teaching methods that are not considered ideal for teaching communicative English. Most of the classes are not interactive and participatory as instructors continue to drag on with monotonous lectures which hardly leave any positive impact on the mind of learners. Apparently, teachers conduct classes in line with CLT method but they shift to GTM every now and then. On top of that, they use native langue in the classroom instead of target language, which badly affects students' level of fluency. This fact is found in a study conducted by Salahuddin, Khan and Rahman 2013 where they traced that the English teachers are predominantly dependent on the GTM method of taking classes and they do not have enough resources to teach. Apart from this, the application of CLT also results in rare outcomes. This view is advocated by Farhad, 2013, (p.289). There are some

other facts that affirm students' negative response to the communicative activities while most of the rural EFL teachers are not confident enough to use CLT pedagogies. Textbooks are not designed according to the growing needs of the learners. As a result, the academic books which lack gradation of vocabulary, subject-matter, exercise and relevant stories hardly cater to the demands of the language learners. Erroneous assessment system and question patterns are also responsible for the failure in English language learning and teaching. Exam questions consisting of MCQs and traditional questions on cloze test, re-arranging of jumbled sentences, essay and paragraph writings can hardly assess learners' analytical and conceptual ability. Moreover, tests are taken only on two skills –reading and writing, completely ignoring the importance of the speaking and listening skills. Learners burn midnight well for sailing through the exam barrier by focusing on reading and writing skills only. Therefore, they are lagging much behind in terms of communication and interaction. Language learning and teaching suffers terribly as a result of acute shortage of qualified teachers. Most rural institutions fail to employ qualified trainers owing to financial and resource constraints. Teachers at primary and secondary level are incompetent in four English language skills. Moreover, native language Bangla is used as a medium of instruction in the classroom, which is a big barrier to developing learners' language proficiency.

It is most frequent issue that the learners struggle with limited resources especially the absence of trained teacher and appropriate supplementary academic materials. Usually, the teachers here in the rural areas tend to prepare his or her students for examination not for making them proficient language users. Thus, students make an effort to pick up the required grade and they have no internal motivation to learn English for other purposes and they move to higher grades with different grades and levels of English knowledge and even inadequate knowledge. This is also explained by Khaniya (1990 as cited in Ghorbani, 2009), "A large number of teachers help students cope with examinations in order to preserve their reputation as good teachers" (p. 51). Language textbooks or academic materials seem to play a pivotal role in educational system of every country. It is most common trend that up to class 11 to 12 in Bangladesh, academic textbooks are provided by NCTB ((National Curriculum Textbook Board) which, according to some students, is difficult to understand. This view has been supported by Montasir Hassan (2018) where the researcher stated that "In comparison to the previous textbook, the present textbook is very difficult, especially the language or vocabulary. It is very tough for the HSC level students to understand. It may be easy for the best institutions and best students. The present textbook as well as the literary texts is not suitable for HSC level students" (p.22). The EFL learners from rural areas of Bangladesh need textbooks with the improved selection and gradation of vocabulary, good printing, suitable subject-matter, exercise and glossary as well as the relevant stories so that they can get more benefits from learning. The entire text should be modified in line with the selection of appropriate vocabulary. "The whole text should be modified, and in case of literary texts, the texts that are very easy to understand especially the vocabulary, should be selected for HSC students" (Montasir Hassan, 2018, p.22).

So, from the above discussion, it can be summed up that the absence of well-equipped and technology enriched classroom, less interesting teaching methods, lack of support & trained

facilitators and insufficient learning materials are making the ways of teaching and learning ponderous.

6. Conclusion

Considering the reality that Bangladesh is one of the countries where an overwhelming number of people are involved with English learning and teaching, it is very important to study difficulties associated with English language education in the country (Chowdhury & Kabir, 2014; Hamid, 2016). Above discussion refers to the key issues linked with EFL teaching and learning in Bangladesh by reviewing relevant concurrent literature. The above thematic discussion has found several problems concerning English language education in the country, which will pave the way for future research.

It seems that the CLT curriculum is one of the most dominant language teaching approaches in the current world. However, integrating CLT into the curriculum requires pragmatic and thoughtful planning. In the context of Bangladesh, the implementation of CLT approach is in clash with the traditional language teaching and learning culture. Hence, it is truly vital for policymakers that the relevance of the CLT approach in the curriculum in the context of Bangladesh should be reconsidered. Moreover, classroom resources and textbook should be designed in line with the objectives of the CLT curriculum.

Language teachers' training must be strengthened by local and overseas expertise from renowned institutions. Moreover, considering the lackluster in these teacher education programs, the current study calls for employing proper monitoring and guidance on prospective training programs. Alternatively, the local training capability building is a sustainable approach which possibly offers school-based training to the teachers through local training centers.

7. Recommendations

The study revealed several problems regarding teaching and learning EFL at the rural areas that are confronted not only by the teachers and learners but by the guardians, administrators, the ministry of education and curriculum designer also.

Taking the aforesaid findings into consideration, researchers put some recommendations for improving EFL teaching learning pedagogy in the rural areas of Bangladesh. The recommendations are given below.

1. Recommendation for EFL Teachers: Technology enriched language teaching has become a pressing need of time. Without having the proper knowledge of techniques, methods and technology, no teacher can be a good language facilitator in the present world. Hence, the language teachers should acquire expertise in technology, techniques and methods to make the language teaching sticky. The above findings show that most of the language teachers in rural areas are authoritative whereas the

language teachers should be interactive, and it is the main requirement of CLT based EFL classroom.

2. Recommendation for EFL Learners: The EFL learning requires more exposure to the language to acquire it naturally. Without having great exposure to target language, no teachers, technology or techniques help students to acquire the language. Hence, the EFL learners should have access to target language to acquire language naturally.

3. Recommendation for Policy Makers: The researchers recommend policy makers redesign their initiatives for excellence in language teaching and learning in the rural areas incorporating technological tools, language lab and teachers' trainings according to the demands of the current world. Moreover, the policy makers should take initiative to revise teaching methods instead of focusing on particular CLT method and make the teachers aware about the respective methods by proper training and workshop in line with the demands and level of learners. Additionally, the language acquisition requires lots of fun and engagement in teaching rather examination-oriented teaching pattern. Hence, it has become a major concern to rethink about the teaching pattern.

4. Recommendation for Guardians of the Learners: Natural language acquisition requires myriad exposures to the target language. Guardians and family members can help learners by offering the unlimited exposures to learning language.

5. Recommendation for the Institutional Administration: The researchers recommend the administrators of the institution to make sure well-equipped classroom integrating advanced technology and fairly furnished classroom with noise free small environment. These arrangements will help students to be motivated to acquire second language naturally.

6. Recommendation for the Material Developers & Curriculum Designer: The main source of academic learning is textbook. The materials should be designed in line with the level of learners. Moreover, it should be designed on time according to growing demands of advanced world minimizing the aforesaid bureaucratic complexities.

7. Recommendation for the Further Researcher: It is expected that more research would carry out with large sample size because the sample size was too small to generalize an overall conclusion applying to all EFL learners.

Moreover, continuous professional development is essential, and teachers need on-going training workshops to keep themselves abreast of the new techniques for teaching English at the rural environment.

The current study makes a contribution to the field of EFL language teaching and learning in the rural areas of Bangladesh as it is an in-depth understanding of non-native EFL teachers' beliefs, their actual classroom interactions and the interplay between their beliefs and practices that shape their cognition in teaching L2.

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