



## Teachers' Roles in English Education at the Secondary Level: A Study in Kushtia District of Bangladesh

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**ABSTRACT :** This study attempted to investigate teachers' roles in developing English language education at the secondary level in Bangladesh. The primary data of this study was collected by using face-to-face interviews with 20 teachers of English language teaching at the secondary level schools in Kushtia district of Bangladesh and direct observation of EFL classes conducted by the same teachers who took part in the interview. Moreover, some renowned journals, articles, research papers, and scholars' views were secondary data sources for this study. The collected data were transferred into a spreadsheet for coding, and then the analysis was done by following content analysis. The study was generally concerned with the important steps and innovative methods adopted by the English language teachers while teaching the English language in the classes. According to the study's findings, some teachers served as guides, motivators, evaluators, and facilitators while teaching English in the classroom. Nonetheless, some teachers could not play these roles due to proper knowledge and training.

**Keywords-** Teachers' roles, English education, Development, Secondary level, Bangladesh

### I. INTRODUCTION

In the past, teachers were only active speakers in the language classroom, and the student's role was to listen to their teachers' lectures. The students could not participate in the discussion, so the real development of the English language was not up to the mark. But at present, teaching the English language has become learner-centered. Now, English language teachers can play important roles while teaching English and organizing everything. He is a facilitator, not a predetermined and pre-prepared lecture delivery tool anymore. However, teachers' first duty is to make the students attentive in the class through motivating them, as the real improvement of the students in the English language depends on their interest. Now, the demand for the English language is increasing for international communication and growing technology and science worldwide. The English language development at any level of the education sector in Bangladesh is today's important demand. Learning English is seen as an opportunity and a necessity for all students. Teachers, in this regard, have some tasks and obligations for the development of the English language in Bangladesh at all levels of school. The utmost understanding of the English language can be transferred to students through teachers' instructional methodologies. Teachers can take on the role of guides to help students develop their English language skills.

Most students in rural areas, even in some urban areas, have very poor English language, but they are not interested in learning the English language carefully. Learning the English language is a fear to them. But, for keeping in relation with the modern world, advanced knowledge in the English language

is very important for everyone. The secondary level of the education sector in Bangladesh is a critical level where the students get more opportunities to develop their skills in the English language. Many studies have suggested that teachers can carefully build their students' English language knowledge. But, very few formal studies have been conducted to find out teachers' specific roles for the development of the English language at the secondary level in Bangladesh. This present study was undertaken to investigate teachers' roles in the development of English language education at the secondary level in Bangladesh through interviews with the teachers of English language education and classroom observation inconsistent with a literature review.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

At present, teaching the English language in every education sector in Bangladesh is no longer confined to the teacher-centered classroom. However, it is being transferred to students centered day by day, and now, the students are not passive learners in the language classroom. Instead, they are active participants in the classes and participate in various learning activities. Here, the teachers can make active students participants through motivation. Harmer (2007) states that teachers create an environment for the learners to develop their skills, and in this environment, they can get adequate exposure to the target language. They can be able to use it naturally and fluently. Ur (2012) opines that the teachers promote the learners to develop the target language. Koran S. (2015) states that teachers play an important role in learning to overcome all types of obstacles. Ready & Gopi (2013) state that the teachers of English help the learners overcome all kinds of fears about communication. The teachers motivate the learners to develop their positive aptitude for communication activities.

According to Niabaho (2019), teachers execute the following functions: controller, organizer, assessor, prompter, participant, resource, tutor, observer, and performer. According to Gurrey (2008), knowing exactly what one was attempting to achieve in teaching was essential, as it was in all great understandings. According to Gurrey (2008), the optimal way to get to work is usually obvious once it is observed. It implies that when teaching a language, a teacher should thoroughly evaluate what they are trying to accomplish and that with careful consideration, a teacher can become an expert. According to Rao et al. (2008), motivation or inspiring pupils to learn was the most important factor in informal learning scenarios. According to Rao et al. (2008), motivation focused attention and energy on the action or knowledge to be learned.

Teachers encourage the students' communication actions in this technique. According to Rao et al., This method emphasizes the importance of the learner's autonomy and accountability for their process. It places a higher value on the learner's experience and expertise in the classroom. It reflects that a teacher can provide an incentive to motivate students, and they can try to develop permanent interests in the students. At the same time, the teacher can encourage the students before teaching any particular person. Freeman (2000) stated that it resulted in more favourable attitudes and better performances when the teachers told the students how well they had done in their course and encouraged them to do better. Freeman added that teachers could enthuse the learning spirit among students, and teachers' 'guidance from time to time could support the students in reading only useful books and material. It again reflects that motivation is the heart of the learning process. Teachers' motivation can effectively promote the students' interest in learning a language. Taj (2011) stated that English teachers made English a lively and interesting subject by adopting new teachings and motivating the students. Taj added that the teachers proved its importance by illustrating real experience and justifying its importance to their colleagues and students. Bhatia (2001) stated that motivation received immediate attention when they first met their classes. Bhatia added that the success of the teachers depended on how well they could arouse the interests and motivation of students, and they could manipulate the classroom situations in such a way that the students were induced to pursue their goals vigorously and enthusiastically.

### III. OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTION

#### 3.1 Objectives of the Study

This study developed some objectives to trace teachers' roles in developing English language education at the secondary level in Bangladesh. The main objective of this study was to know the teachers' performed roles in the class to create English language education at the secondary level in Bangladesh. And the specific objectives of this study were:

- To know the teachers' roles in the class through interviews with the teachers of English in the development of English language education at the secondary level in Bangladesh.
- To trace out the teachers' performed roles in the class by observing the classes taken by the teachers of English in the development of English language education at the secondary level in Bangladesh.
- To get an overall idea about the teachers' roles in the class to develop English language education at the secondary level in Bangladesh.

#### 3.2 Research Questions of this Study

The following questions were developed to collect the data for this study:

- What do the teachers of English know about their roles in the class to develop English language education at the secondary level in Bangladesh?
- What roles do the teachers of English perform in the class to develop English language education at the secondary level in Bangladesh?
- What roles should the teachers of English perform in the class to develop English language education at the secondary level in Bangladesh?

### IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The main purpose of this study was to understand teachers' roles in English education at the secondary level in Bangladesh. This study is mainly qualitative. The primary data of this study was collected through face-to-face interviews with 20 teachers of English from the secondary level, and the researcher conducted a direct observation of EFL classes to elicit data. Those 20 teachers were selected purposively from a different secondary level educational institution located in the Kushtia district, and 50% of the selected teachers were from a rural area. Another 50% were from urban areas.

Moreover, the researcher analyzed ten related articles published in different newspapers and magazines, ten research articles published in renowned journals, and some conference papers to obtain data. The analysis of the received data was done employing content analysis. The data was organized for the analysis as a whole set of each teacher's answers because they provided their perceptions and experiences differently. Then, the data was reduced by coding. The coded data was tested by the classroom observation data and the secondary data of this study.

### V. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section contains the study's findings, including the instructors' perceptions, the researcher's class observation results, and the results of other sources.

#### 5.1 Findings from Teacher Interview

Most of the teachers in the interview session have said that they follow direct methods that refer to the conversation, discussion, and reading in the language itself without using the students' native language and translation. They have added that the students get more opportunities to listen to the English language through direct methods. They have stated that through this direct method process, students' expression ability improves. They have suggested not to use the native language in the classroom. They have opined that the teachers should encourage the students to speak more in the target language and learn how to communicate in that language to improve English at the secondary level in Bangladesh. They have asserted that the teachers can take the students as partners to interact freely and use the target language. Many of the respondent teachers of this study think that the teachers should prepare their students in the target language by using the direct method and understanding how to

communicate in the target language. And in this case, the teacher's most important role is to involve their students actively in the teaching-learning process, and the structural approach is more important in this regard. Some of the respondent teachers of this present study have emphasized using converted language. For example, "My name is Rifa" for "I am Rifa," the students may say it. Most of the respondent teachers of this study have asserted that the students can feed themselves through learning when they are interested in learning. In this case, the teachers can make the students plan their lessons to improve their command of the subject. And, if a teacher enables to make the students interested, they will begin to develop themselves in the subject by themselves even without the help of a teacher. And that time, more improvement of the students in the English language will be found. They have been told that they have to use their native language Bangla in the classroom to make their students understand so that they can pass the examination, which is the main command of the institution.

### **5.2 Findings from Classroom Observation**

It has been observed that most of the teachers teach their students in a translation method, in which students are active listeners. From the direct observation of English language classes, it has been realized that the English language teachers play the roles of developers and depositors of knowledge. They develop and deposit understanding to their students by transmitting their professional knowledge. They develop and deposit what is known and discover which is unknown. They observe, understand, and motivate the students by removing obstacles to learning the target language. They create conditions conducive to the students. For conducive conditions for the students, the teachers introduce the activities to motivate the students to learn and develop the English language effectively. And through motivation, the teachers understand the feelings of the students. Before teaching the English language to the students, they plan their lessons and assign a day to prepare for. They adopt this process to improve students' skills in the English language. They share their experience with their students in English and ask them to express their own experiences in English. And this sharing supports the students in developing their skills in the English language. This approach also encourages the students to work hard to build their skills in the English language. The English language teachers teach their students four basic skills to master well over English. Thus, the teachers play the role of growing the students' ability to understand, speak, read, and write. The teachers play the roles of facilitators, coaches, models, evaluators, managers, and advocates for English language development at the secondary level in Bangladesh. But, it was found that both the teachers and students used their native language Bangla more than the English language in the classrooms.

### **5.3 Findings from other Sources**

The result from other sources, like journals, articles, research papers, and scholars' views, reflects that an important role of the teachers is to make the students competent in the English language. Another part of the teachers is to adopt appropriate methods for teaching English like pair work, role play, group discussion, and what needs to do. Today demands that teaching the English language must be communicative-centered so that the students can develop their skills in the English language. It is because communicative-centered English language teaching improves students' speaking skills in the English language. In this case, the teachers can conduct role-playing activities like interviewing, explaining, and convincing. These approaches generate opportunity with more practice for the students, and this practice develops the students' communicative competence in the English language. The teachers must organize courses, set learning objectives, establish a positive learning environment in the classroom, and evaluate students' progress to realize everything clearly and develop their English language skills. In English language classes, the teachers play the role of imparting their knowledge and developing students' English language skills. They act as the coaches to prepare the students for every lesson. They are in the classes to support the students for practicing the English language frequently, not their native language Bangla and encourage them to practice English. They make every English language lesson interesting and attractive to their students.

### **5.4 Summary of the Findings**

The findings of this study show that students' mental and intellectual growth is a prerequisite for the development of the English language in Bangladesh at the secondary level. Secondary education

is an important area where mental and intellectual talents are developed by thinking about specific subjects under the direct supervision of teachers. This is a role that English language teachers can play in preparing their students for mental and intellectual growth. The findings of this study also show that it is the responsibility of students to follow their lecturers. On the other hand, teachers have the responsibility of preparing students to follow them. Teachers are the resources students use to help them identify methods to improve their English language skills. The professors make each class simple so that students would be engaged in learning English and will be able to solve their problems.

According to observations of English language classes and interviews with teachers, the majority of the teachers have not gotten any training in English language instruction. Despite having excellent English language skills, teachers lack a clear grasp of their tasks due to professional English language training. Many newly hired instructors act out roles that they aren't aware of. They have little understanding of what qualifications certified English language teachers should possess. The majority of teachers have been discovered to play roles to ensure that their students pass the examination. English language teachers should establish a positive environment or opportunity in the classroom to adjust and enhance their English language skills. At school, they should develop good communicative skills.

This favourable atmosphere supports the students to be more confident in developing the English language. Now, the age of technology has changed the whole landscape of English teaching and learning activities in the world. English language teachers at any level use computer/laptop and internet technologies to study the exact text with the students. The English language teachers should serve as the sources of information to the students about how they can develop their skills in the English language. If the students are provided with the opportunity of understanding, they will set themselves in the English language.

## VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The teachers should commit to their students to develop the English language.
2. The teachers should know the subject well before teaching the students.
3. The teachers should manage and monitor their students' development in the English language.
4. The teachers should think systematically and intend to develop their students in the English language from their experience.
5. The teachers should be members of English language teaching and learning communities.
6. The teachers should be aware of the latest findings in English language teaching and learning.
7. The teachers should be confident about the teaching and learning process of the English language.
8. The teachers should receive training on English Language Teaching and learning.

## VII. CONCLUSION

The primary purpose of this study was to determine the roles of English language teachers in the development of English language education in Bangladesh at the secondary level. The study aimed to achieve its goal through literature analysis, firsthand observation of English language classrooms, and interviews with English language teachers in Bangladesh's secondary education sector. The outcomes of this study show that instructors have a significant role in the development of the English language in Bangladesh's secondary education sector. However, many instructors in Bangladesh are unable to perform their responsibilities correctly in developing the English language at the secondary level due to a lack of sufficient knowledge and training in teaching the English language. More training should be provided to English language instructors to effectively develop the English language in Bangladesh. This study is meant to assist secondary English language instructors in Bangladesh in better understanding their roles in improving the English language worldwide. It will also assist students in developing a broad perspective and a rational or structured method of thinking. This study gives valuable information and support to English language teachers in Bangladesh who acquire English at the secondary level.



**Data Sharing:** The datasets analyzed during this study are available from the authors on reasonable request.

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