The EDRC Journal of Learning and Teaching

a peer reviewed journal

Volume 11 Number 2 June 2025
ISSN 2411-3972

www.edrc-jefler.org

The EDRC Journal
of
Learning and Teaching

Volume 11 Number 2 June 2025
ISSN 2411-3972

Price: $ 5.00 (BDT- 300.00)

Permission may be sought from

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Website: www.edrc-jefler.org

Printing: Krishibid Printing and Publication, Dhaka-1205
Phone: 88-01825914857

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Learning and Teaching

Volume 11 Number 2 June 2025
ISSN 2411-3972

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The EJLT quarterly publishes original papers, review papers, conceptual frameworks, analytical and simulation models, case studies, empirical research, technical notes, and book reviews. Selection of submissions for publication is based on relevance, clarity, topicality, individuality and interest to academics and practitioners. We firmly believe that ethical conduct is the most essential virtue of any academic activities. Hence, any act of plagiarism is a totally unacceptable academic misconduct.

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Literature Review and Methodology: A Critical Appraisal of *EJLT*, Volume *8*(3) December 2022

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Abstract

This study critically evaluates the literature review and research methodology sections of all peer-reviewed articles published in The EDRC Journal of Learning and Teaching (EJLT), Volume 8, Issue 3, December 2022 (ISSN 2411-3972). Using qualitative content analysis, this article identifies the strengths and limitations of how literature reviews are framed and how research methodologies are designed and implemented. Findings suggest that while many articles demonstrate commendable contextualization and methodological alignment, some suffer from limited theoretical integration and lack of methodological transparency. This review offers constructive insights for enhancing future academic submissions in the field of learning and teaching.
Keywords: Literature review, research methodology, EDRC Journal, qualitative methods, educational assessment

1. Introduction

Academic journals play a pivotal role in shaping scholarly discourse and disseminating empirical findings. *The EDRC Journal of Learning and Teaching* (EJLT), published by the Education and Development Research Council (EDRC), serves as a platform for educators and researchers, especially in the Global South, to share insights related to classroom practices and pedagogical innovation. The quality of a research article largely depends on its grounding in prior scholarship and the rigor of its research design. In particular, a thorough Literature Review provides context and justification, while a clear Methodology ensures reliability and validity. In this review article, we analyze these two sections for each empirical study in the December 2022 issue (Volume 8, No. 3) of The *EDRC Journal of Learning and Teaching (EJLT)* (ISSN 2411-3972).

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Articles cover topics such as learning assessment, social media in ELT, English skill practices, reading assessment, participatory teaching, student inattentiveness, speech therapy for ASD, online education perception, and speaking skills teaching. We systematically evaluate how each article's literature review contextualizes the study, and whether its research design, data collection, and analysis are adequately described and appropriate. Our critique identifies exemplary practices and common gaps, offering constructive insights for future research. This paper focuses nine research articles that explore topics such as language assessment, participatory pedagogy, use of social media in language learning, online education, and the integration of learners with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). By systematically evaluating the literature reviews and methodologies within these articles, this study aims to identify prevailing trends, strengths, and gaps in scholarly practices within this volume.

Objectives

1) To assess the depth, coherence, and theoretical alignment of the literature review sections in each article.
2) To evaluate the design, appropriateness, and clarity of the research methodologies employed.
3) To compare and contrast these two critical sections across the articles to determine best practices and common challenges.
4) To offer recommendations for future contributors to the EJLT and similar academic outlets.

2. Literature Review

A well-structured literature review is a cornerstone of academic inquiry. It establishes the conceptual foundation of a study, maps the terrain of existing scholarship, identifies research gaps, and justifies the new study's relevance (Boote & Beile, 2005). In educational research, especially, the literature review not only guides methodological choices but also signals awareness of pedagogical and contextual developments. Hart (1998) emphasizes that a critical review should go beyond summary and engage with sources analytically, demonstrating synthesis and critique. Aga's (2022) article on learning assessment in Ethiopian HEIs presented a well-organized and theme-based review that drew from foundational literature (e.g., Stiggins, 2007; Brown & Knight, 1994) to contextualize the issue. Similarly, Muniruzzaman et al. (2022) on social media use in English learning integrated sources discussing both technological affordances and communicative language learning principles, citing works like Lee (2010) and Akhiar et al. (2017).

In empirical educational research, particularly in journals such as The EDRC Journal of Learning and Teaching, the literature review plays an even more central role. This is because the journal primarily addresses context-specific issues in Bangladesh and surrounding regions, which demand careful grounding in both global theory and local practice (Chowdhury & Kabir, 2014). Reviews that fail to situate research within both bodies of literature risk limiting the relevance or transferability of their findings. Despite this, numerous studies highlight that literature reviews in education journals from developing countries often remain superficial or overly descriptive (Jesson, Matheson, & Lacey, 2011; Ahmed, 2021). They frequently lack critical synthesis and rely on generalized claims without citing regionally grounded empirical studies. Moreover, reviews often conflate background information with literature engagement, leaving readers with underdeveloped rationales for the research.

Similarly, the role of the methodology section is not only to describe what was done but also to demonstrate research rigor and replicability. Creswell and Creswell (2018) outline that sound educational methodology should clearly address design rationale, participant selection, instrument development, data analysis techniques, and ethical safeguards. In studies from lower-income countries, common methodological weaknesses include vague sampling procedures, unvalidated instruments, and limited explanation of data analysis (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Mertens, 2020).

There is increasing recognition that journals, especially those publishing practitioner-oriented research, must balance accessibility with academic rigor (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). This requires not only training authors but also strengthening editorial guidelines around literature review standards and methodological transparency. The current article draws on these frameworks to critically assess how Volume 8(3) of The EDRC Journal performs in these two essential components: literature engagement and research design clarity.

3. Research Methodology

This is a qualitative meta-review based on document analysis. The corpus consists of nine full-length peer-reviewed research articles from Volume 8, Number 3 (December 2022) of *The EDRC Journal of Learning and Teaching (EJLT)*. The evaluation focuses exclusively on the **literature review** and **research methodology** sections of each article. A standardized coding framework was developed to guide the analysis. Each article was examined for:

- Literature Review: Scope and currency of sources, integration of theory, clarity of research gaps, alignment with research questions.
- Research Methodology: Clarity of research design, description of sample and setting, data collection tools, analytical techniques, and ethical considerations.

The evaluation was informed by established academic writing standards (Creswell, 2014; Machi & McEvoy, 2016), ensuring consistency and scholarly rigor in the assessment. Coding was conducted manually and iteratively refined through thematic comparison.

4. Findings, Analysis, and Discussion

This section evaluates how the research methodologies in the articles were articulated and implemented, alongside the literature reviews.

4.1 Article 1:

The Quality of Learning Assessment at Higher Education Institutions (HEIs): Views and Knowledge (Firdissa J. Aga)

Literature Review: This article does not have a distinct "Literature Review" section. The introductory section discusses concepts of assessment quality and alignment with teaching/learning (e.g. Brown & Knight, 1994; Ainslee, 2018) but primarily focuses on framing research objectives and theoretical terms. The absence of a dedicated review is a notable limitation. By not surveying past studies systematically, the article misses an opportunity to justify its research questions or to situate its findings among existing literature. This omission weakens the rationale: for instance, it would have been helpful to know what previous studies in Ethiopian or similar contexts have found about perceptions of assessment. The introduction provides some scholarly definitions (e.g. Stiggins, 2007; Ainslee, 2018) and highlights the multi-faceted nature of assessment. It also identifies a clear gap (inadequate institutional emphasis on assessment quality). These elements suggest authors' familiarity with assessment theory. Without a structured literature review, the link between prior research and research questions is underdeveloped. There are no citations to Ethiopian case studies or related empirical work to show how this study builds on or differs from others. The literature discussion is relatively brief and embedded in the introduction, limiting depth.

Methodology: The study employs a quantitative survey design. Two questionnaires (for teachers and students) were administered at two purposively chosen universities (U1, U2). A total of 166 valid responses (72

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teachers, 94 students) were returned from 190 distributed copies, yielding a 87% response rate. Data were analyzed using SPSS 23 with descriptive and inferential statistics. The methodology section clearly states sample sizes and composition, and reports use of statistical analysis software. Using two campuses offers some diversity of context. The procedures for data coding (assigning codes to respondent groups) are transparently described. The rationale for choosing the two universities is only briefly mentioned (age, convenience); more justification is needed on representativeness. Sampling is "purposive" but details (e.g. how participants within each university were selected) are sparse. There is no mention of questionnaire validation or reliability testing. Also, no literature review was cited to justify the survey items or to discuss survey design considerations. Overall, the quantitative approach seems reasonable but lacks information on instrument development and sampling rigor.

The current study explored a lear description of sample (n=166) and data analysis method; focus on teacher and student perspectives. No explicit literature review section (limiting theoretical grounding); limited detail on instrument development and sampling procedures; no pre-testing or validity checks discussed.

4.2 Review Article 2:

Teaching English Language Using Social Media at Secondary Level in Bangladesh (Muniruzzaman et al.)

Literature Review: This section outlines the educational relevance of technology and social media. It begins by noting that "educational technology is, nowadays, a popular issue" and positions social media as valuable learning tools. The authors cite studies on using visuals and pictures to teach writing (Navidinia et al., 2018), the learning benefits of Instagram (Akhiar et al., 2017), and Facebook language use (Idris & Ghani, 2012). These studies support the idea that social media can enhance EFL writing skills and motivation. The review also mentions the prevalence of social media use by teenagers and suggests untapped pedagogical potential. The literature is focused on positive uses of social networking for language learning. It identifies relevant prior research (e.g. Navidinia et al., 2018 on visual aids; Lee, 2010 on Facebook writing) that justifies exploring social media in English teaching. It establishes that social media use is widespread among learners, which highlights the timeliness of the study. Multiple sources are referenced to show benefits of specific platforms (Instagram, Facebook), indicating a reasonable literature grounding.

The review is somewhat narrow, focusing largely on writing skills and visual media; it does not address speaking, listening or broader pedagogical frameworks. It could have more explicitly linked these studies to the Bangladesh context. Additionally, it does not critically discuss any limitations of social media use (e.g. distractions), potentially introducing bias. Overall, the literature cited is relevant, but not exhaustive.

Methodology: The study uses a qualitative design. Data were collected via semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs). The researchers visited four secondary schools in Bangladesh. A total of 48 participants took part: 5 English teachers and 43 students. Interviews were conducted with each of the five teachers, and FGDs were held with student groups. The data collection process is described: teachers were briefed and consented before interviews, and FGDs were facilitated by researchers with teachers absent. Two instruments were used: an interview schedule with six main questions and an FGD schedule derived from the same themes. The schedule covered topics like use of social media in daily life, classroom activities, and use for different English skills. Responses were thematically analyzed (see Table 1 for design). The mixed-data strategy (interviews + FGDs) is a strength. The sample includes both teachers and students, allowing multiple perspectives. The methodology section provides detailed procedural descriptions (consent process, number of interviews/FGDs). Table 1 (Research design) clearly summarizes sample sizes and analysis approach. This transparency is commendable.

The sample size is small (only 5 teachers, 43 students) and purposively drawn from just four schools, which may limit generalizability. The methodology lacks detail on how FGD participants were selected or grouped (beyond "five FGDs of five grades". There is no mention of how thematic analysis was conducted (e.g. coding procedures) or how inter-coder reliability was addressed. Instruments (questionnaire items) are described content-wise but not included, making it hard to judge their quality. Overall, while clearly presented, the qualitative study could have further elaborated on sampling rationale and data analysis rigor.

The study finds well-articulated rationale linking literature to study aims; clearly described qualitative design with interviews and FGDs across multiple schools; both teachers and students represented. Limited sample (5 teachers) and unclear selection of student participants; lack of detail on analysis procedures (thematic coding); absence of instrument validation discussion; literature review could be broader.

4.3 Review of Article 3:

Practices of English Language Skills at the Alim Level in the Madrashas in Bangladesh (Hoque, Siddiqua, & Antara)

Literature Review: This section provides extensive context on Bangladesh's language policy and ELT history. It begins with Bangladesh's economic growth and the "pivotal role of English". It reviews political and curricular shifts post-independence, including the replacement of English with Bengali in official domains (Hamid & Baldauf, 2014) and later reinstatement of English under CLT-based policies. The authors cite numerous sources on challenges in ELT – for example, exam-driven teaching that neglects listening and speaking. This broad sweep situates the study of madrasa English practices within national policy debates. The review is thorough and historically rich. It cites many sources (Hoque 2008, 2010; Ali & Walker, 2014; Rahman et al., 2018; Hamid & Baldauf, 2014) to document how ELT policies evolved and why performance has been disappointing. This depth provides valuable background and demonstrates the authors' command of the topic. It clearly identifies systemic issues (policy inconsistencies, curricular focus on exams) relevant to madrasa education.

The review is very long and dense, which may obscure its main point for some readers. It mixes political history with education without clearly focusing on "madrasa practices" per se. Only near the end does it highlight that speaking and listening are neglected– a key point for an article on language skills. A more concise review targeted to the specific research gap might have been preferable. Also, while it references many studies, the connection between these findings and the present research questions is implicit rather than explicit.

Research Methodology: A mixed-method approach was adopted. The study used two questionnaires (one for teachers, one for students) as well as in-depth interviews. The questionnaire was checked for validity, reliability, and practicality with expert input (though no details are given on this process). Participants included 125 Alim level students and 25 EFL teachers, plus interviews with 6 EFL teachers. The questionnaires contained ~20 items on ELT issues (syllabus, skills practice, etc.). Data from surveys and interviews were to be analyzed (methods are not fully described). The design addresses both breadth (125 students) and depth (6 teacher interviews). Consulting experts for the questionnaire's validity is good practice. Clearly specifying participant numbers strengthens credibility. The use of both quantitative and qualitative data aligns with the mixed-method goal.The methodology section lacks detail on sampling (how students/teachers were chosen), or how many schools were involved. It does not describe how interview data were analyzed (thematic coding, etc.). The

explanation of questionnaire construction is brief – no example items or discussion of pilot testing. It is also unclear how the mixed data were integrated. In summary, while the multi-instrument approach is appropriate, more methodological transparency would bolster confidence (e.g., detailing response rates, data analysis techniques).

Comprehensive contextual literature linking national policy to classroom practice; mixed-method design with substantial student sample (125) and teacher interviews. Overly long background with diffuse focus; methodology lacks details on sampling and analysis; no reporting of actual questionnaire or interview coding; limited discussion of data integration.

4.4 Review of Article 4:

Assessment of English Reading Skill at Secondary Level in Bangladesh (Podder, Sen, & Shakil)

Literature Review: The authors focus on assessment theory and the Bangladesh curriculum. They note that "assessment is a continuous process" involving various techniques. They distinguish Assessment for Learning (AfL) versus Assessment of Learning (AoL), citing Westwood (2001) and Harrison (1986). They explain that formative assessment (AfL/continuous assessment) supports learners' strengths, while summative assessments at year-end measure cumulative skills. The review then describes Bangladesh's secondary curriculum: 20% marks are allocated to continuous assessment (classwork, homework, quizzes), as shown in the included table. This establishes the policy context for reading assessment.

The review is concise and relevant, covering key concepts (AfL vs AoL) and situating them in the local grading system. The inclusion of curriculum specifics (20% CA) provides concrete detail. Citing authoritative sources (Westwood 2001) supports general claims, and referencing the NCTB curriculum lends official grounding. The review is heavily descriptive of assessment types but does not cite any studies on reading assessment difficulties or student outcomes. It lacks discussion of literature on how reading is actually assessed or taught, which might directly inform the study's questions. There is no mention of research findings on reading skills at this level. Thus, the literature review serves mainly to define terms and policy rather than to justify the research problem.

Research Methodology: This qualitative study involved interviews and observations. The researchers interviewed four English teachers (from two secondary schools, one high- and one low-performing) and two experts (a curriculum specialist and a teacher educator) about reading assessment practices. They also observed reading assessments in class and conducted

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with 40 students (classes 9–10, 10 students each). The FGDs used random selection within each school. Relevant documents (textbook and curriculum) were also analyzed. All data were collected with teachers' permission, and teacher identities were anonymized (T1–T4).

The methodology is well-detailed. It triangulates data sources: teacher interviews, expert interviews, classroom observations, FGDs, and document analysis. The selection of one high- and one low-performing school adds comparative insight. Describing FGD group size and random selection enhances credibility. These multiple methods are appropriate for exploring assessment practice in depth.The sample is small and limited to Dhaka, which may affect transferability. Details on how the "observed assessment" was conducted (e.g. how many sessions) are missing. The process of analyzing qualitative data (e.g. thematic analysis) is not described, nor is any reliability procedure mentioned. Nonetheless, the mixed qualitative approach is largely sound and clearly reported.

Clear definitions of AfL/AoL; contextualized with national curriculum data (20% CA); robust qualitative design with teacher and expert interviews, observations, and student FGDs. Literature review lacks citation of specific reading assessment research; methodology could better explain data analysis steps; limited geographic scope.

4.5 Review of Article 5:

Participatory Approaches to Enhance Teaching-Learning Activities in English Classes (Aminul Haque)

Literature Review: This article does not present a conventional literature review. The introduction emphasizes the author's pedagogical philosophy: participatory teaching (group work, pair work, interactive discussion) is effective for student engagement. It also briefly mentions three learning theories (cognitivism, constructivism, scaffolding) in the abstract, implying a theoretical basis. However, these theories are not elaborated through external sources in a dedicated section. Instead, the content reads as a teacher's reflective practice, citing only one reference (Eriksson & Granlund, 2004) on participatory approaches.

The introduction highlights key concepts and refers to educational theory in broad terms (cognitivism, constructivism). It communicates the author's engagement with learner-centered pedagogy. The lack of an explicit literature review means there is no discussion of prior empirical studies or frameworks guiding this approach. This absence is a major

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weakness if one expects a research article. The theory citations are sparse and primarily from the author's own perspective rather than a survey of research. As a result, it is unclear how this article's content builds on existing evidence or how generalizable its claims are beyond the author's context.

Research Methodology: This piece appears to be a descriptive, practice-based report rather than a research study. It does not have a section labelled "Methodology." Instead, the author describes lesson plans he developed and contextual factors (history of the college, class sizes) in the introduction and subsequent sections. There is no discussion of data collection or analysis. The "techniques of my teaching" section reads like a teaching methodology account (e.g. using group work, encouraging observation by seniors).

As a reflective teaching account, it offers detailed classroom examples and rationale for participatory techniques (e.g. forming groups, pair work). It can serve as a case of applied pedagogy in context. Scientifically, the article provides no formal methodology. There are no participants, sampling, or instruments – it is essentially a teaching narrative. This makes it impossible to evaluate "research methods." For the purpose of our review, the absence of methodology is a clear limitation. Without research data or systematic evaluation, claims about participatory methods lack empirical support in the article.

Emphasizes learner-centered pedagogy and includes practical examples (group work, observations); mentions relevant theories in abstract. No formal literature review or research method; entirely descriptive. Lacks empirical evidence to support conclusions. This format differs fundamentally from typical research articles.

4.5 Review of Article 6:

Causes of Inattention in the Civics Classroom: A Case Study at the Higher Secondary Level (Md. Rokonuzzaman)

Literature Review: The review defines key concepts and factors related to student attentiveness. It begins by asserting attentiveness is "one of the most important factors for effective teaching and learning" (citing Napoles, 2006). It then compiles findings from multiple sources: e.g. Witt (1986) on attentiveness as classroom participation, Forsythe (1977) on when students are most/least attentive, and Cohen (1991) on the benefits of attention in class. The review lists behaviors of inattentive students (slang, side-talking) citing Patton (1981), Tannock (2007), Lauth et al. (2006). It

also notes environmental factors: large class size (Finn, 1998), classroom arrangement (Petersen & Gorman, 2014), and the chaotic impact on others. This section comprehensively catalogs causes and effects of inattentiveness.

The literature review is rich with definitions and examples, citing many relevant studies. It covers psychological (mind wandering), behavioral (side-talk, technology use), and contextual factors (class size, seating) in detail. It clearly demonstrates familiarity with global literature on classroom attention. This thoroughness helps frame the research. The review reads like an annotated bibliography; it lists findings one after another without synthesizing them into coherent themes. The writing is somewhat repetitive (e.g. multiple definitions of inattentiveness). It also lacks specific references to Bangladesh or civics education literature; all sources seem international. Including local or subject-specific studies would strengthen relevance.

Research Methodology: A qualitative approach was used to explore student inattentiveness. Three methods were employed: in-depth interviews with two Civics teachers, classroom observations at the HSC level, and one focus group discussion (FGD) with 14 students. Participants (teachers coded T1, T2; FGD with 14 randomly chosen students from a class of 300) were from Government Sheikh Fazilatunnessa Women's College. Data collection procedures (e.g. obtaining consent) are not detailed but instruments like interview protocols are implied.

Multi-method data collection (teachers, observation, student group) enhances the depth of the case study. Using both adult and student perspectives is appropriate for examining causes of inattention. The choice of a large class setting is meaningful given literature on class size effects. The study is clearly positioned as qualitative, aiming for depth and understanding. Details are scarce. We are not told the interview or FGD questions, nor how data were recorded. The sample (two teachers, one FGD) is very limited; only one classroom was studied. No analysis strategy is described (e.g. coding of interview transcripts). The methodology section does not indicate ethical procedures (consent, anonymity). Though typical of case studies, the lack of methodological transparency (selection, procedures) is a weakness.

Comprehensive literature on student attentiveness, covering multiple dimensions; qualitative design with triangulation (interviews, observation, FGD). Literature review lacks local context; methodology section is brief and lacking detail (e.g. no mention of data analysis); very small, convenience sample.

4.7 Review of Article 7:

An Investigation on Regular Speech and Language Therapy during COVID-19 for Children with ASD (Sharmin Jahan)

Literature Review: This article's structure blends background and introduction without a labeled review. The introduction notes that online speech therapy ("telepractice") is a viable alternative during lockdown, but that barriers exist for ASD children and parents. It references general COVID-19 educational disruption (UN, UNICEF). It also discusses the role of parents as therapists during online therapy. However, there is no dedicated section summarizing prior ASD or therapy studies specifically; topics like "Autism Spectrum Disorder" and "Speech Therapy" are defined in subsections 1.1–1.4, but these are general explanations rather than literature synthesis.

The article contextualizes its topic with pandemic-related issues and some references on teletherapy. It correctly identifies ASD challenges (communication gaps, parent roles) in narrative form. There is no systematic literature review. Key questions (e.g. effectiveness of online therapy) are not grounded in prior research findings. The content is mostly descriptive background, and many statements (e.g. "most parents believe ASD cannot be recovered") appear anecdotal without citations. This section lacks the critical engagement expected in a lit review.

Research Methodology: This study used a mixed-method design. Fifty children with ASD were purposively selected: 25 continued regular online speech therapy and 25 did not (irregular group). In addition, questionnaires and an FGD were conducted with parents. The main data collection instrument was a "Speech & Behavior Modification Checklist" designed for the study (details limited). Data from the checklist were tabulated. Statistical analysis (chi-square) was applied to compare the groups. Procedures included parental consent and sampling from one hospital and one online therapy center in Chittagong.

The study clearly identifies two groups (regular vs. irregular therapy), enabling a quasi-experimental comparison. It combines quantitative (checklist scores) and qualitative (FGD) data. The use of a standardized checklist (even if researcher-constructed) provides structured measurement. Basic ethical considerations (consent) are mentioned. Methodological details are incomplete. The selection process is vaguely described ("random selection"), and sample representativeness is unclear. The checklist is presented as having "no reliability and validity," a major flaw. No information on FGD methods or analysis is given. While results

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tables are shown, there is no mention of how qualitative feedback was analyzed. The methodology reads partly like a report: for example, data analysis mentions SPSS and chi-square only in passing. The labeling of groups and variables is somewhat confusing in the text, making it hard to follow the design. In sum, the mixed-method approach is suitable in principle, but execution details are lacking. Addresses an important COVID-19 issue with a clear comparative design (regular vs. irregular therapy); use of both checklist scores and parent feedback. No formal literature review of ASD therapy research; key instrument has no validity data; sampling and analysis procedures under-described.

4.8 Review of Article 8:

Online Education at the Higher Secondary Level in Bangladesh: A Study of Students' Perception (S. M. Salim & M. I. Hasan)

Literature Review: The literature review (Section 2) discusses challenges and benefits of online learning. It starts by pointing out the digital divide: rural areas lack internet and resources, a fact supported by Khatun (2020) and Noor & Shaoun (2021). It then highlights positive features of online classes: anytime access, time-saving, enhanced interaction. Citing Singh & Thurman (2019), it notes that virtual classes allow communication among learners, though Petrides (2002) cautions about less spontaneity. The review also lists challenges: poor content, long screen time, health issues, lack of teacher training and infrastructure. This paints a balanced picture of online education's pros and cons.

The review covers both sides of online learning – highlighting accessibility issues in Bangladesh (which grounds the study locally) and referencing global studies on interaction and drawbacks. It cites relevant literature (Singh & Thurman, 2019; Mondira & Mahtab, 2021; Jamal et al., 2020) to support claims. This section effectively frames the significance of students' perceptions. The review could be more focused on student perceptions specifically (it largely discusses context and general factors). It does not cite any studies on student attitudes or perception surveys, which would be directly relevant. Some citations (e.g. Goldberg 2018 on US internet) feel slightly tangential to Bangladeshi context. Overall, though reasonably thorough, the review does not deeply engage with prior perception studies.

Research Methodology: This is a mixed-method survey study. The authors collected data via an online Google Form questionnaire from over 300 HSC students (male/female, from science, business, humanities, and

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both public/private colleges). The survey comprised 32 questions on topics like benefits, barriers, technical issues, and improvements of online classes. Participation was voluntary, anonymous, and data confidentiality was assured. The mixed-method aspect suggests some open-ended questions for qualitative insight, though details are scarce. The authors describe it as "mixed method research" with both quantitative and qualitative data.

A large sample (307 respondents, as stated later) with diversity in subject streams and college types strengthens generalizability. The use of an online form is appropriate given the context (COVID constraints). The authors mention ethical considerations (voluntary participation, confidentiality). The methodology is clear about what was measured (student experiences and readiness). The description is brief on the questionnaire's development – we do not know how questions were formulated or validated. The "mixed method" claim is not well-supported; it appears primarily quantitative (multiple-choice) with no description of qualitative coding. There is no mention of how data were analyzed (though tables and charts appear in results). Sampling bias is possible (only internet-savvy students respond), and the authors note limited rural representation. In summary, the method is straightforward but could have detailed the qualitative component and analysis techniques. Relevant focus on student experience during pandemic; large, varied sample using Google Forms; balanced literature context (digital divide vs. opportunities). Limited information on questionnaire design and analysis; the "mixed-method" label is not clearly substantiated; rural student voices underrepresented (acknowledged).

4.9 Review of Article 9:

Teaching English Speaking Skills at the Higher Secondary Level in Rural Bangladesh (Md. Abu Abdullah)

Literature Review: The literature review (Section 2.0) addresses the importance of English and communicative competence. It references national policy (learning English as an international language, compulsory schooling) and the introduction of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in curricula. It cites studies on problems in English education in non-English speaking countries (Farooqui, 2007; Paul, 2012) and notes the lack of language use outside class. Brown (1994) is quoted on conditions that facilitate classroom communication (pair/group work, authentic input). Questions are raised about how much speaking practice occurs in grades 11–12. Overall, the review underscores that while policy emphasizes skills, practice remains limited.

The review ties national policy to classroom reality, highlighting a gap (speaking practice is ignored) supported by literature. It cites both local (Paul, 2012 in Bangladesh) and global (Farooqui, 2007; Brown, 1994) sources, giving the reader context. The concerns raised directly justify studying speaking skills. The literature review is fairly short and theoretical; it does not cite specific empirical studies on student speaking proficiency or rural education. The section ends abruptly with research questions, so it feels incomplete. Also, it might have discussed previous surveys on speaking skills or teacher practices for a stronger foundation.

Research Methodology: The study used qualitative methods. Data were gathered via semi-structured interviews (with 3 teachers) and focus group discussions (FGDs) (with 30 students) from three rural colleges. Additionally, three classroom observations were made (one per teacher). Participants included ten top-performing HSC students per college, selected by merit. In FGDs, 10 students each (total 30) discussed speaking practice. Data collection respected ethical norms (volunteer participation, anonymity). Data were transcribed, coded, and analyzed thematically. The methodology is appropriate for an exploratory study. Selecting top students (high achievers) is an interesting choice, as their experiences may differ from average students. Triangulating interviews, FGDs, and observation is robust. The researcher's steps (inviting teachers, selecting students) are explained. Ethical considerations are mentioned.

Details on analysis are minimal; while coding is mentioned, no framework or inter-coder checks are described. The focus on top students may bias results (disinterested or lower-achieving students are omitted). The sample size is small (3 teachers, 30 students), which may limit representativeness. Some methodological choices (e.g. why 3 colleges, basis for choosing those teachers) are not justified. Consistent linkage of policy to practice in literature review; qualitative design with multiple data sources (interviews, observations, FGDs). Literature review lacks empirical studies specifically on speaking skill challenges; methodology could better explain analysis procedures; potential sampling bias by selecting only high-performing students.

5. Conclusion

This review of Volume 8(3) of The EDRC Journal of Learning and Teaching reveals a spectrum of scholarly rigor in the Literature Review and Methodology sections. On one hand, several articles offer thorough literature contexts and well-designed research: for example, Articles 3 and 4 provide extensive background on English education policies and articulate

clear multi-method strategies. Their methodologies are transparent about participants and techniques (surveys + interviews, or interviews + FGDs + observations), which enhances credibility. On the other hand, we observed shortcomings in others: Article 1 and 5 notably lack formal literature reviews, limiting theoretical grounding; Articles 7 and 8 describe interesting study designs but leave gaps in explaining instrument validation or analysis methods. Common weaknesses include small, non-random samples, scant details on data analysis, and sometimes a one-sided literature stance (emphasizing positives without critique). We identify how comprehensively authors engaged prior research and how rigorously they designed their studies. Overall findings highlight varying standards: some articles present rich, contextualized reviews and robust mixed-method or qualitative designs, while others omit formal literature reviews or lack methodological detail. We conclude with recommendations for strengthening research rigor in future issues.

Overall, the strengths lie in identifying relevant educational issues and choosing fitting qualitative or mixed methods for most topics. The weaknesses suggest a need for more methodological transparency (e.g. describing coding or analysis rigorously) and more comprehensive engagement with previous research (especially locally-relevant studies). Future authors might better balance narrative background with critical literature synthesis, and explicitly justify research design choices. By refining literature integration and methodological clarity, subsequent issues of the journal can further elevate the quality and impact of its published studies.

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Adopting Active Learning Strategies in Political Science Education in Bangladesh

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Abstract

This study examines the potential of transitioning from teacher-centered to student-centered learning approaches in political science education in Bangladesh. Rooted in constructivist and social constructivist theories, the research explores active learning strategies such as group discussions, simulations, and personalized learning to foster student engagement, critical thinking, and practical application of theoretical knowledge. Data gathered through class observations and discussions reveal that students and teachers alike acknowledge the limitations of traditional lecture-based methods. However, cultural norms, resource constraints, and systemic barriers hinder the widespread adoption of active learning. A proposed pedagogical model incorporating diverse strategies—ranging from formative assessments to project-based and generative learning—offers actionable steps for creating inclusive and interactive classrooms. The study concludes that embracing student-centered approaches can significantly enhance educational outcomes, preparing students to meet the demands of modern governance and policy-making while contributing to broader educational reform in Bangladesh.
Keywords: *Active learning, critical thinking, pedagogical strategies.*

1. Introduction

The educational paradigm in Bangladesh has predominantly been rooted in teacher-centered methods, emphasizing lectures over interactive or participatory approaches (Chowdhury, 2016). This trend, especially in higher education, reflects a reliance on rote memorization, limiting the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills among students

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(Cook & Walsh, 2012). Political science, as an academic discipline, carries immense significance in a developing nation like Bangladesh, where understanding governance, policymaking, and democratic processes is essential (Mojumder, 2022). However, the current pedagogical approach in political science education often fails to cultivate meaningful engagement, critical analysis, and active participation (Morris-Jones, 1978). Active learning has the potential to transform higher education in Bangladesh by moving away from traditional, lecture-driven pedagogical approaches. By promoting more interactive and student-centered teaching methods, active learning encourages deeper intellectual engagement, critical thinking, and practical application of theoretical knowledge (Hossain, 2021). These approaches, including group discussions, case studies, and simulations, have been proven effective in fostering a collaborative learning environment (Hossain & Younus, 2024). This shift aims to bridge the gap between abstract political theories and real-world issues, enabling students to connect their learning with practical experiences in governance, policy-making, and democratic processes. Through this study, the potential for active learning to create a more informed and participatory academic culture in Bangladesh's political science classrooms is explored, ultimately contributing to broader educational reform in the country (Hossain, 2020).

1.1 Background and Rationale

Bangladesh's educational framework reflects a strong preference for lecture-driven instruction, influenced by large class sizes, limited resources, and deeply ingrained teaching traditions (Shafiullah, 2024). Political science, a subject integral to understanding democratic development and policy design, requires not just memorization but active critical engagement. However, students in Bangladeshi universities are often disengaged, with limited opportunities for collaborative learning and critical inquiry (Paul, 2016). Active learning, described as 'any instructional method that actively engages students in the learning process,' offers a promising alternative (Felder & Brent, 2009). Techniques such as simulations, debates, and group activities have effectively promoted critical thinking and engagement in other contexts (Park, 2012).This study explores how active learning strategies can transform political science education in Bangladesh. By adopting methods that prioritize interaction and practical application, students can be better equipped to critically evaluate and apply knowledge to real-world scenarios. The research evaluates the effectiveness of these strategies, examines perceptions of their feasibility and impact, and proposes a model plan for implementing active learning systems in political science classrooms. This initiative aims to address the existing gaps in teaching practices and create a more dynamic and engaging educational environment for students. Objectives of the study

1.2 Objective of the Study

The primary objective of this study is to explore the potential of active learning strategies in transforming political science education in Bangladesh from a traditional teacher-centered model to a more student-centered approach. The specific objectives of the study are to:

1) Evaluate the limitations of traditional teacher-centered methods in political science education in Bangladesh and their impact on student engagement.
2) Assess the effectiveness of active learning strategies (e.g., group discussions, simulations) in enhancing student participation.
3) Analyze the perceptions of students, instructors, and institutions on adopting student-centered learning in political science classrooms.
4) Propose a pedagogical model integrating active learning to create interactive and practical learning environments in Bangladeshi higher education

2. Literature Review

The literature review provides a theoretical and empirical foundation for the study by examining active learning approaches, their relevance in political science education, and the contextual challenges of implementation in Bangladeshi higher education.

2.1 Active Learning: Theoretical Perspectives

Active learning is a pedagogical approach that emphasizes student engagement through participatory methods, including discussions, problem-solving, collaborative activities, and other interactive learning experiences (Khoiriyah, Roberts, Jorm, & Van der Vleuten, 2015). The core idea of active learning is that students do not passively absorb information; instead, they actively engage with content and concepts, constructing their understanding through interaction with both the material and their peers (Laili & Lufri, 2019). The theoretical foundations of active learning are rooted in constructivist and social constructivist learning theories. Constructivism, as articulated by Piaget (1977), proposes that learners actively construct their knowledge by interacting with their environment and experiences, rather than passively receiving it. This process of knowledge construction fosters deeper understanding and retention. Social constructivism, based on Vygotsky's (1978) work, further emphasizes the importance of social interactions in learning. According to this view, learning is a collaborative process, where students build knowledge through dialogue, shared experiences, and the collective efforts of a community:
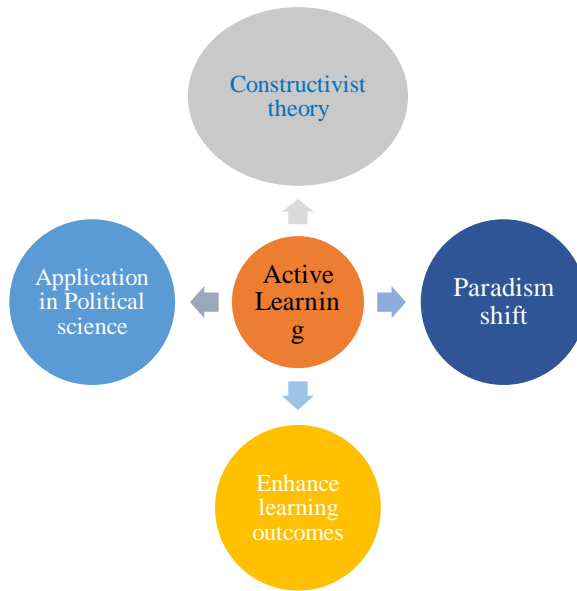
Figure 1. Active Learning's Impacts

Jacob et al. (2016) framed active learning as a Paradism shift from the traditional model of passive reception of information to a more dynamic engagement with content. This shift fosters critical thinking, problem-solving, and the development of higher-order cognitive skills such as analysis, evaluation, and synthesis. Active learning methods encourage students to apply theoretical knowledge in real-world contexts, which is particularly valuable in disciplines like political science, where abstract concepts need to be connected to practical and complex social and political realities. Research by Andrews, Leonard, Colgrove, Kalinowski, and Klionsky (2011) provides compelling evidence that active learning improves learning outcomes, particularly in STEM fields, where it has been widely implemented. This evidence suggests that active learning has the potential to enhance the learning experience in other fields, such as political science. In this discipline, where student engagement with content is crucial for understanding governance, policy, and democracy, active learning could play a pivotal role in improving student engagement and academic success.

2.2 Applications in Political Science Education

Active learning strategies have demonstrated considerable potential in enhancing student engagement and critical thinking within political science education. Political science, by its nature, deals with abstract

theories and complex frameworks that require strong analytical skills and a capacity for applying theoretical concepts to real-world situations. To support this, various active learning techniques, such as debates, simulations, and case studies, have been recognized as effective tools for fostering these essential competencies. For example, debates provide an excellent opportunity for students to articulate and defend diverse perspectives, thereby cultivating their argumentative and analytical skills (Permatasari, Yerizon, Arnawa, & Musdi, 2020). Through debates, students are challenged to critically examine political issues, leading to a deeper understanding of the complexities involved in governance and policy analysis (Qureshi, Khaskheli, Qureshi, Raza, & Yousufi, 2023):

Implement debates

Conduct simulations

Ensure rich environment

Foster critical thinking

Enhance understanding
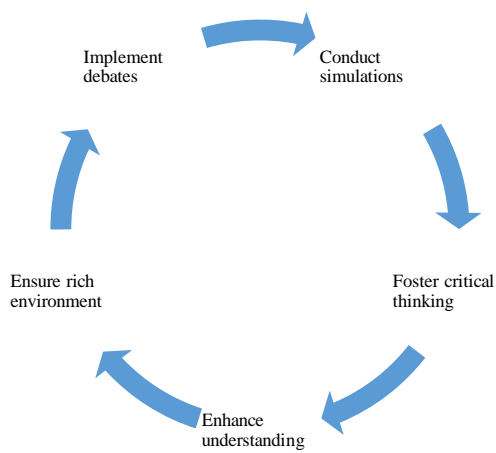
Figure 2. Active Learning in Political Science (Source: Authors)

Simulations, including mock United Nations sessions or role-playing exercises, offer students an immersive experience in real-world decision-making processes. These activities effectively bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application by placing students in scenarios that require them to navigate political dynamics and engage in policy-making discussions (Dewiyanti, Brand-Gruwel, Jochems, & Broers, 2007). Such methods not only enhance students' motivation but also provide a rich learning environment where they can explore and understand the intricacies of governance, international relations, and policy formation. These active learning techniques thus contribute significantly to the development of critical thinking and a deeper comprehension of political science concepts, making them valuable tools for enhancing the overall educational experience.

2.3 Barriers to Active Learning in Developing Nations

The adoption of active learning strategies in developing nations, such as Bangladesh, encounters a variety of significant challenges. One of

the primary obstacles is resource constraints, including inadequate infrastructure, large class sizes, and limited access to technology (Nardo, Chapman, Shi, Wieman, & Salehi, 2022). These issues create an environment where traditional teaching methods, which focus more on content delivery rather than student interaction, continue to dominate (Kilinska & Ryberg, 2019). The lack of resources often limits the ability to implement interactive teaching tools or create an engaging learning environment that active learning methods require. Consequently, despite the potential benefits of active learning, the logistical and infrastructural limitations in many developing nations hinder its widespread implementation.

Cultural factors also play a crucial role in limiting the effectiveness of active learning in these contexts. In many South Asian countries, including Bangladesh, classroom dynamics are often hierarchical, with students expected to listen passively to instructors rather than engage in discussions or challenge ideas (Hossain, 2020). This rigid structure discourages active participation and makes it difficult for collaborative learning methods to thrive. Also, faculty resistance to active learning is another barrier, often stemming from a lack of adequate training or awareness about these methods (Cooper, Brownell, & Marsteller, 2016). To address these challenges, targeted interventions are essential, such as professional development programs for educators, redesigning curricula to incorporate interactive learning, and providing institutional support for smaller class sizes and the integration of technology and active learning tools (Sawatsky, Zickmund, Berlacher, Lesky, & Granieri, 2015).

2.4 Student and Instructor Perceptions of Active Learning

Understanding the perceptions of students and instructors is crucial for evaluating the feasibility and effectiveness of active learning. Research indicates that students often appreciate the engaging nature of active learning but may initially struggle with its demands for autonomy and critical thinking (Yang, Zhang, Chen, Lu, & Tian, 2024). For instance, active learning approaches require students to shift from passive reception to active participation, which can be challenging in cultures accustomed to rote memorization (Rossi, Lima, Sabatke, Nunes, Ramirez, & Ramirez, 2021). Instructors, on the other hand, may recognize the potential benefits of active learning but express concerns about its practical implementation. Concerns include time constraints, the additional effort required for lesson planning, and a lack of institutional support (Kek & Huijser, 2011). Studies also highlight the need for capacity-building programs to equip instructors with the skills and confidence to adopt active learning techniques (Setiawan & Islami, 2020). Existing literature on active learning predominantly focuses on different disciplines or education in developed nations, with limited emphasis on political science in Bangladesh. Furthermore, there is a lack of

empirical data on classroom practices, as well as insufficient exploration of student and instructor perceptions and practical solutions to overcome implementation barriers in the local context. This study addresses these gaps by investigating active learning strategies and proposing a tailored model for political science education in Bangladesh.

3. Research Methods

The study employs a qualitative research design, focusing on researchers' classroom observations and a comprehensive review of existing literature. This approach enables an in-depth exploration of active learning strategies in political science education in Bangladesh, emphasizing theoretical and practical perspectives. Relevant national and international literature, including journal articles, books, and reports on active learning systems, pedagogical strategies, and their application in political science education. A thematic analysis was conducted on the reviewed literature to align theoretical insights with the findings from classroom observations. Comparative analysis was used to identify gaps between theoretical recommendations and real-world practices in political science education. On the other hand, over the past 5–6 years, researchers systematically observed their own political science classes in various colleges. The focus were the use of active learning techniques, such as group discussions, debates, role-plays, and problem-solving activities, was documented to evaluate their effectiveness in engaging students. Observations were analyzed descriptively, focusing on patterns of student engagement, challenges encountered, and the outcomes of various strategies. Key insights were synthesized to assess the practical feasibility of these methods.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1 Reactions to the Active Learning System

As educators, we strive to establish effective communication with students. However, the prevailing scenario in our institution mirrors that of other colleges across Bangladesh. Students generally express satisfaction with traditional lecture-based teaching but a minority show interest in alternative, interactive methods. During class discussions, some students expressed a desire for opportunities to voice their opinions and engage actively. Despite the encouragement provided, most students remain hesitant due to the entrenched teacher-centered approach in Bangladesh, a legacy of colonial-era practices. Students, staff, and administrators share a general acceptance of the lecture-based model, which aligns with traditional practices in the country. However, this system is increasingly seen as outdated in today's world, where student-centered learning is gaining recognition as a more effective method. While some students display enthusiasm for discussing their ideas, the rigid teaching structure often suppresses such attempts:
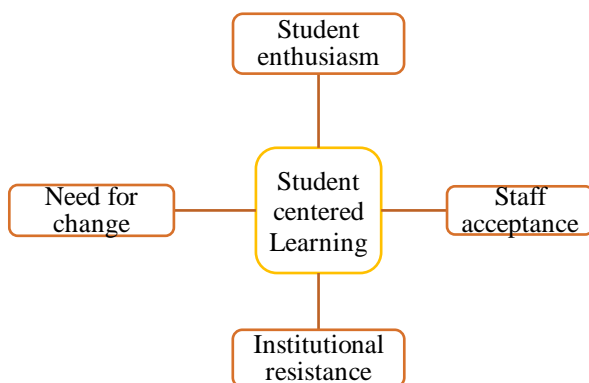
Figure 3. Transitioning to Student-Centered Learning

The need to shift toward student-centered learning is evident, as this approach fosters creativity, critical thinking, and a more interactive learning environment.

4.2 Reflections on Teaching Practices: Insights and Experiences

The researchers believe that the current teacher-centered practice is inadequate for contemporary education. Global trends increasingly emphasize student-centered approaches, which empower learners and encourage their active participation. From classroom experiences, it is evident that students want to express their views but often lack the confidence or the conducive environment to do so. Teachers must take deliberate steps to create opportunities for students to articulate their ideas and explore their potential. Student-centered learning is perceived as critical for nurturing independent thinkers capable of addressing societal challenges. Allowing students to explore and share their perspectives can unlock their latent talents, contributing to the development of a skilled and knowledgeable workforce. As political science educators, the shift to a more interactive and participatory teaching style is not only a necessity but also an opportunity to prepare students for a competitive, knowledge-driven world.

4.3 Current Teaching Practices with Literature on Active Learning

A review of the literature highlights that teacher-centered methods, while traditional, have both strengths and limitations. Most Asian countries, including Bangladesh, are transitioning toward student-centered learning to meet the demands of a globalized, knowledge-based economy. This approach positions the teacher as a facilitator, encouraging students to take greater ownership of their learning.Comparative analysis reveals that student-centered practices align better with the modern educational landscape, fostering critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaborative

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skills. The literature underscores the necessity of this pedagogical shift, providing evidence that active and participatory methods yield better learning outcomes. Embracing these strategies in political science education will enable students to connect theoretical knowledge with practical applications, better preparing them for real-world challenges.

4.4 Self-Evaluation and Critical Reflection on Teaching Practices

Reflecting on current practices and insights from the literature, it is clear that a transition from teacher-centered to student-centered learning is imperative. By adopting these methods, educators can cultivate confidence and independence among learners, equipping them to navigate complex global challenges.The literature provides actionable insights for enhancing teaching practices, emphasizing the importance of interactive, student-led activities in political science classrooms. Moving forward, the implementation of student-centered learning strategies will not only improve educational outcomes but also align teaching practices with contemporary global standards. Adapting to this approach is essential for fostering a dynamic, collaborative, and skill-oriented learning environment.

4.5 Proposed Pedagogical Model

The study proposes a pedagogical model to create an engaging and inclusive classroom environment by integrating various strategies. Active learning methods, such as group discussions, hands-on activities, simulations, and interactive lectures, can actively involve students in the learning process. Personalized learning tailors instruction to individual students' needs, interests, and abilities, while project-based learning fosters critical thinking and problem-solving through real-world tasks. Formative assessments help monitor student progress and provide timely support to those needing extra assistance:
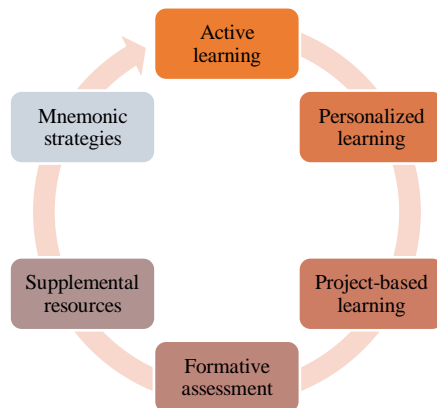

Figure 4. Strategies for an Inclusive Classroom

Supplemental resources, such as non-mandatory learning materials, enable students to deepen their understanding beyond the classroom. Mnemonic strategies, like using songs, acronyms, or patterns, aid memory retention, while structural strategies, such as conceptual maps, help organize ideas into cohesive frameworks for better comprehension. Additionally, generative learning strategies, including note-taking, underlining, and highlighting, encourage students to actively engage with and internalize knowledge. This comprehensive model aims to transition from traditional teacher-centered approaches to dynamic, student-centered learning environments that promote engagement, critical thinking, and lifelong learning.

5. Limitations

The study is based solely on researchers' classroom observations and secondary data from literature, without direct input from students or instructors through surveys or interviews. Findings are context-specific and may not fully generalize to all political science classrooms in Bangladesh.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, the study highlights the urgent need to transition from traditional teacher-centered teaching methods to dynamic, student-centered approaches in Bangladesh's higher education system, particularly in political science classrooms. Active learning strategies, such as group discussions, simulations, and personalized instruction, can bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, fostering critical thinking and engagement. The findings reveal that while students and teachers recognize the limitations of traditional methods, systemic and cultural barriers impede the adoption of active learning. By implementing a pedagogical model that incorporates diverse strategies, including formative assessments, project-based learning, and mnemonic tools, educators can create more inclusive and interactive classrooms. Embracing these changes will not only enhance the quality of education but also equip students with the skills needed to navigate the complexities of modern governance, policy-making, and democratic processes, ultimately contributing to the nation's socio-political and educational advancement.

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A Historical Review of Bangladesh-Myanmar Diplomatic Initiatives on the Rohingya Crisis

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Abstract

Diplomatic initiatives between Bangladesh and Myanmar started in 1978 immediately after the Rohingya's infiltration into Bangladesh from Myanmar in 1977 and 1978 maximum of which were repatriated through agreements and MOU (Memorandum of Understanding). The 2017 Rohingya infiltration has brought a large number of Rohingy, amounting to over 750000 between August 2017 and January 2018. It has been added to the previously around 300000 existing Rohingyas who could not be repatriated in 1978 and 1992-2003. Bangladesh started diplomatic initiatives with Myanmar to repatriate all the Rohingya/ FDMNs (Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals who came after 2017) through signing a bilateral agreement with Myanmar on 23 November 2017 in a safe, voluntary, and dignified manner through a verification process. Bangladesh also signed a tripartite agreement with Myanmar backed by China on four points consensus. Six years have passed since 2017 Rohingya crisis, no single Rohingya/FDMN have formally returned to Myanmar. Three repatriation attempts in 2018, 2019, and 2023 have failed. This paper wants to explore the major diplomatic initiatives made by Bangladesh with Myanmar on Rohingya crisis. The method of study is qualitative and explanatory. The study is based on literature. Neo-classical realist theory is applied in this study.
Keywords: Rohingya/FDMNs, diplomatic initiatives, repatriation

1. Introduction

The diplomatic relationship between Bangladesh and Myanmar started and improved immediately after the independence of Bangladesh. The relationship was based on peaceful coexistence, non-alignment, mutual respect of sovereignty and national integrity. Relations went through a number of conflicting and competitive situations but not collaborative

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situations (Chowdhury, 2023). The relations got weakened due to the Rohingya crisis. The Rohingya crisis started first in 1942 when some Rohingya entered into East Pakistan, now Bangladesh due to communal violence. The movement of Rohingya was insignificant until 1975. Even though Bangladesh raised the issue before Myanmar authorities when 3500 Rohingya arrived in Bangladesh (Kipgen, 2020). Myanmar launched operations against the Rohingyas in 1977, 1978, 1991, 2012, 2016 and 2017-2018 that pushed Rohingyas to Bangladesh. Continuous repressions, tortures, snatching rights, abuse, human rights violations and state sponsored persecution continued on Rohingya Muslim comminity by labeling them foreigners, outsiders, illegal Bengalis and immigrants, disloyal, harmful for national integrity and by making them 'others' and 'statelessness'(Wade 2017; Chowdhury 2023).

Myanmar did not show interest to develop good relations with its close neighbour Bangladesh whereas Bangladesh was always proactive to strengthen bilateral relations. The Rohingya crisis played a significant role in affecting bilateral relationship between Bangladesh and Myanmar negatively. Despite delay of Rohingya repatriation, military coup in 2021, political turmoil and destabilizing situation in Myanmar, Bangladesh has maintained good relations with Myanmar by sending representatives in Myanmar's annual military parade. Bangladesh provided shelter and other basic needs on humanitarian grounds, constitutional obligations, foreign policy principles, respect for international law, and the call of the international community, though Bangladesh is not a signatory country of all refugee conventions. Immediately after 2017 Rohingya crisis, Bangladesh and Myanmar signed "Arrangement for the repatriation of the Forcibly Displaced Rohingya Nationals"/FDMNs on 23 November 2017 with a verification process. The agreement allowed starting repatriation process by the end of 2018. However, repatriation has not started yet despite having taken few initiatives.This paper covers major diplomatic initiatives between Bangladesh and Myanmar on the Rohingya crisis and its repatriation process despite having bilateral, tripartite agreement and regional and international pressure on Myanmar.

1.1 The Rationale of the Study

A study of diplomatic initiatives between Bangladesh and Myanmar on the Rohingya crisis is necessary because the crisis has turned into a long-standing crisis without tangible development of repatriation. Bangladesh considers security interests, economic pressure, administration, and diplomatic challenges due to the existence of Rohingya/FDMNs. The Rohingya crisis has also influenced the policy choices of Bangladesh. Without starting repatriation process, Myanmar has started blaming Bangladesh and delaying the repatriation process in various means by not following the agreed deal. On the other hand, Bangladesh has been

presenting the Rohingya crisis to the world community and seeking financial and diplomatic assistances to convince and create pressure on Myanmar to take back its nationals. Despite having a bilateral repatriation agreement, tripartite agreement, and pressure from the UN and its agencies, human rights groups, the international community, repatriation could not be started.

1.2 Theoretical Framework

Neo-classical realist theory is applied in this study. This theory integrates the domestic factors like political systems, decision-making, values, and cultures that matter and influence another state's behaviour. Taliafeeo, Lobell, and Ripsman (2009) refer to neo-classical realism seeking a different reaction in foreign policy in response to similar external constraints, such as diplomatic, economic, and military responses. External influences and forces penetrate domestic politics to shape a country's foreign policy.

Myanmar's Government machinery, political parties, Bamar and Rakhaine Budddhists have always followed push factor since 1970s. Religious, language similarities, porous border, history, political culture, and the mindset of the people of Bangladesh also worked as influential factors to cross border and enter into Bangladesh. Before 2017 Rohingya crisis, Bangladesh actively integrated only UNHCR to assist and supervise the Rohingya repatriation. After 2017 Rohingya crisis, Bangladesh signed bilateral agreement with Myanmar, tripartite agreement with Myanmar and China to start and expedite Rohingya/FDMNs repatriation process. National Unity Government (NUG) and Arakan Army (AA) demanded its participation in Rohingya repatriation process. UN and its aid agencies, regional powers, and the international community have been assisting Rohingya/FDMNs financially through emergency response plans. Rohingya's demonstration and their voices attracted the attention of the international community and media to work for their repatriation. Diaspora Rohingyas have also been raising the world public opinions in favour of Rohingya repatriation, citizenship rights, safety and security in Myanmar. Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) helped Gambia to take the Rohingya crisis to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for 'provisional measures' on 11 November 2019. Relocation of Rohingya to the Vhasan Char Island was protested by the Rights Organizations. Amnesty International urged international community to take "all political and diplomatic tools" to pressurize Myanmar on human rights obligations. Human rights Council initiated Resolution in UN Security Council for Rohingya genocide claims but did not see the light due to veto by China. Bali declarations called for improvement of human rights situation in Rakahine State. At the ASEAN-Australia summit held in March 2018, Australia and Malaysia raised the Rohhingya issue and its implication on

regional security. The US, EU, and Canada have imposed sanctions on Myanmar for violation of human rights. In light of the above discussions, it can be said that neo-classical realist theory is best suited and relevant to understanding Rohingya crisis and diplomatic initiatives between Bangladesh and Myanmar.

2. Literature Review

The Rohingya crisis has been the global issue as a persecuted and statelessness nation. Bangladesh is heavily bearing the cost of the protracted Rohingya crisis. Simson and Farrelly (2021) present that Myanmar society has also been facing the Rohingya crisis in Rakhine State. Cindra (2022) says it would be a more significant issue that might have negative consequences on Bangladesh, the region, and the global stage with the blame on security degradation and Islamic radicalization. Yasmin (2023) states that the Rohingya issue is now a trans-border issue that demands continuous discussion, coordination, engagement, and problem-solving approach. Khan (2023) describes the Rohingya crisis is a perennial issue at the heart of Bangladesh's foreign policy. Inclusion of Myanmar in the Indo-Pacific Ocean (IPO) discussion is necessary because security and economic interests of Bangladesh would be challenging without Myanmar's active participation.

Chowdhory (2023) has described in the book ''Bangladesh Myanmar Relations Amidst Rohingya Crisis: An Evaluation Through Regional Security Complex Theory'' the identity construction of Rohingya, genesis of Rohingya crisis, how Rohingya crisis has affected bilateral relations and its prospect and challenges, why resolution of Rohingya crisis is required, why good relations are necessary amidst Rohingya crisis and effort to mitigate, impact of Rohingya crisis. The author has mentioned how many visits and dialogues have held with Myanmar and few are mentioned as well. Ahmed (2020) has stated in the edited book ''The Rohingya Refugee Crisis: Towards Sustainable Solutions'' how Bangladesh has kept Myanmar under pressure through international community and UN and its agencies, institutions. He has also stated that if Bangladesh did not take measures internationally, Myanmar would have got leverage to go free resulting in more delay or no repatriation. In chapter section 1(Response) " Fiscal Implication of Rohingya Crisis for Bangladesh" Khatun and Kamruzzaman discussed the new influx of Rohingya has multi-faceted challenges for Bangladesh. The issue is related to diplomatic and sub-regional, regional and international aspects.

BRAC and the University of Dhaka on 30 November 2022 organized a discussion session, where the speakers discussed the reduced flow of humanitarian assistance from donors and international agencies, the changing needs of the refugees, livelihood means in 2023 and beyond,

and roles of local, national and international NGOs in addressing these issues and chalk out for new finances. The interim country representative of UNHCR spoke about the protracted situation, and the solution lies with Myanmar. Ambassador of Turkey assured Turkey's assistance to Bangladesh until Rohingyas are repatriated. Mission Director, USAID, offered to continue support and work and guard against the dehumanization of Rohingyas. High Commission of Canada in Bangladesh, explained Canada's position to mount pressure on Myanmar, continue advocating and draw attention to the Rohingya crisis. Rohingya voices have urged the world community to hear their words that they are citizens of Myanmar and want to return homes with proper citizenship rights and protection. Bangladesh could not force to go back due to non-refoulement by respecting international law. Bangladesh has now been taking different diplomatic initiatives to find durable solution of Rohingya crisis. This paper aims at fulfilling the research gap of chronological diplomatic initiatives between Bangladesh and Myanmar over Rohingya crisis.

3. Research Methodology

This paper is based on document analysis. Primary and secondary data are collected and studied for the research. Primary data are collected from the statements and press releases of MOFA, MoDMR, government statement, UN Security Council, ICJ, ICC, UNHCR, IOM, WFP, UNDP, and RRRC office. Secondary data sources are books, newspapers, journals, magazines, survey reports, official document reviews, videos, documentaries, internet sources and researched reports. The method of research is qualitative. Variables are the Rohingya, Rohingya crisis, Bangladesh, Myanmar, China and diplomatic relations. All the data are organized, reviewed, studied, and interpreted to find out the research objectives.

4. Findings

Bangladesh officially started diplomatic relations with Myanmar on 13 January 1972 and Bangladesh made first foreign minister level visit in May 1972. Myanmar's close economy, stubborn attitude and behaviour, Rohingya issues, and inclination toward China and India (Hemispheres, 2015) could not help Bangladesh to develop strong bilateral relations with Myanmar. From 1972 to 1985, among few agreements, the Repatriation of Refugees Agreement was one of them. Bangladesh first experienced around 10000 Rohingyas penetration into Bangladesh in 1974 most of them returned to Myanmar. Foreign relations were seen normal and neighbourlihood. Subsequent exodus happened in 1977, 1991-1992, 2012, and lastly between August 2017 and January 2018. After the exodus, the GoB granted the Rohingya Asylum applications and provided few refugee statuses between 1978 and 1992 (Hossain, 2021). Agreement was signed on

07 May 1992 between Myanmar and Bangladesh, integrating UNHCR to monitor the repatriation process. Despite having MoU, Myanmar could not turn up and showed a negative attitude toward UNHCR, resulting in a stalled repatriation process. Myanmar always considered the Rohingya crisis as a bilateral issue, and UNHCR should not be part of this repatriation process (Elahi, 2022). Myanmar government declared the complete closure of repatriation in November 1998. Bangladesh had been following preventive diplomacy to resolve the Rohingya crisis (Rehman, 2023).

Bangladesh was always proactive and supportive to further the relationship. Bangladesh reiterated its stand by saying that "repatriation is the only solution to end the Rohingya crisis, and there will be no alternative". Myanmar's foreign ministry 'Think Tank' suggested keeping aside the Rohingya issue for closer relations. The crisis and the number of Rohingya/FDMNs concern Bangladesh, but Myanmar denied providing citizenships to Rohingya people living in Bangladesh. Bangladesh has never condemned Myanmar in the public domain. Bangladesh invited Myanmar to visit Bangladesh and prove their allegations and develop relations.

Repatriation Agreements

GoB and GoM made the first repatriation deal on 06 June 1978 that facilitated 200000 Rohingya to return to Myanmar. The second MOU (Joint Statement) was signed on 28 April 1992 over a repatriation scheme for 250000 Rohingy who entered Bangladesh between 1991 and 1992. Bangladesh made another MOU with UNHCR in 1993 to protect the refugees in the camps and ensure voluntary repatriation, followed by private interviews with the Rohingyas in Bangladesh. UNHCR signed another MoU with Myanmar in 1993 to allow a return, issue of identity cards, and permission for unrestricted movement. GoB continued its diplomatic efforts to restart and complete the repatriation. The 14-month-long strike of the Rohingyas stopped the repatriation process. The repatriation process resumed in 1998, but GoM imposed restrictions and refused to accept 700 cleared Rohingyas (Ahmed, 2014).

Diplomatic Initiatives after 1978 Rohingya Penetration

Foreign Ministers of both countries met in Dhaka on 13-16 April in 1978. On 01 June 1978 Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh visited Myanmar with a delegation team comprising of 9 members to find out solution. Deputy Foreign Minister of Myanmar met with Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh on 07 July in 1978. Foreign Minister of both countries discussed about Rohingya crisis on 30 September 1991 in New York after UN General Assembly session. Bangladesh protested and warned the waning diplomatic relations in October, 1991 if Rohingya continued to enter. Bangladesh again sent Foreign Minister to Myanmar on 21 November 1991 to make bilateral deal for repatriation. Myanmar arranged 'Flag Meeting' in Maungdaw

Township on 31 December 1991, 07 and 28 January 1992. A list of 10616 Rohingyas was handed over to Myanmar. On 23 April 1992 Myanmar's Foreign Minister came to Dhaka, Bangladesh to find solution of Rohingya crisis. A meeting on preparation of repatriation list was held on 14 and 17 May 1992 at Chottogram. Bangladesh arranged meeting on 22 August, 24 October, 30 December 1992. A delegation team of Myanmar visited Bangladesh for 4 days. He assured for repatriation but no specific time was given to terminate the repatriation. Repatriation process resumed in 1994, 1995, 1996 and till July 1997. After a meeting held at Youngoon , Myanmar on 12 November 1998, repatriation again started with small figure in 1998 and continued till 2000. On 14 and 15 January a delegation team of Bangladesh visited Myanmar and requested to provide recognition of Rohingyas. They were repatriated in 2001, 2003, 2004, and 2005. On 29 December in 2009 Myanmar agreed in a meeting to take back registered and cleared 9000 Rohingyas. In 2011 in the month of December the then Prime Minister of Bangladesh visited Myanmar and placed the Rohingya repatriation issue (Akhand 2018).

Diplomatic Initiatives after 2017 Rohingya Crisis

Myanmar pushed Bangladesh to sign an agreement, and it became clear when State Councilor of Myanmar Aung San Su kyi stated on 10-14 November in 2017 at the 31 ASEAN Conference that Rohingyas would be taken back. A delegation team from State Councilor's office of Myanmar visited Bangladesh on 02 October 2017 and held a meeting with the delegation team of Ministry of Foreign affairs. The Myanmar's delegation team left without giving any joint statement (Uddin, 2017). A delegation team led by the then Home Minister of Ministry of Home Affairs of Bangladesh visited Myanmar on 27-24 October 2017 and discussed with Myanmar's Minister for Home Affairs about possible ways to repatriate Rohingya/FDMNs to Myanmar. Two agreements were signed on security and border cooperation; halt outflow of Myanmar residents to Bangladesh and form a joint working group. MoU was signed on 23 November 2017 to start the repatriation of 1.1 million Rohingya/FDMNs in a safe, voluntary, and dignified way by the end of January 2018 through the verification process (Chowdhury, 2023). Joint Working Group (JWG) formed in December 2017 with a view to aiming coordinate a safe, voluntary, and dignified repatriation through a verification process (Banerjee, 2023). Myanmar's Home Affairs Minister visited Bangladesh on 15-17 February 2018 but no concrete decisions were taken of repatriation. Bangladesh had provided Myanmar a list of 835000 Rohingyas for repatriation in six phases from January 2018 to December 2020. Myanmar sporadically had selected only 42000 Rohingyas from different families but Bangladesh did not

expect random selection. Scheduled repatriation was not started by the end of January 2018. Four meetings and two repatriation attempts had failed in 2018 and 2019. Myanmar preferred to solve the Rohingya crisis bilaterally and this preference had been supported by China. In regard of Rohingya question China will never come to the side of Bangladesh and China never stood against Myanmar. On 15 March 2023, a 17-member delegation team from Myanmar visited Teknaf to discuss Rohingya identity verification. After the visit to Rakhine State on 5 May 2023, Rohingya/FDMNs demanded to get back their properties and citizenship. A 14-member delegation team of Myanmar officials visited Teknaf, Cox's Bazar, on 25 May 2023 to talk to Rohingya as a part of confidence-building measures.

Bangladesh issued a press release (MOFA, 2019) asking Myanmar at a Non-aligned Movement summit in October –November 2019 to stop its unjustified campaign against Bangladesh over the repatriation issue. Bangladesh also protested the comments made by the State Councilor on 15 November 2019 that Bangladesh shows non-cooperation and non-respect for a bilateral agreement. Myanmar wanted Bangladesh to launch a repatriation process amidst an uncertain environment in Rakhaine, which is difficult for Bangladesh as the international community is concerned with the human rights situation. Bangladesh has been using 'Public Diplomacy' by highlighting the cultural linkages between the people of the two countries and building international opinion with effective pressure in order to improve relations with Myanmar and keep the Rohingya issue in discussion.

Military Diplomatic Initiatives

Chief of Army Staff (CAS) of Bangladesh Army visited Myanmar on 08 December 2019 and met with the deputy chief of the Myanmar army. Both sides discussed existing friendly relations, exchange of training, augmentation of cooperation, and the repatriation of forcefully displaced people of Myanmar. CAS of Bangladesh army again visited Myanmar on 09 October 2022 to discuss the uncertainty of 1 million Rohingya. A three-member delegation team led by the Commander of the Bureau of Special Operation met with the CAS of Bangladesh Army on 26 October 2022, in which he spoke about the Rohingya crisis. He reiterated the quick repatriation of Rohingya/FDMNs.

Trilateral Initiatives

A tripartite working group mechanism was established led by China to evaluate the Rohingya repatriation process on the ground through an informal trilateral meeting on the sideline of the UNGA where UN secretary-general's special envoy was present to witness. It was part of a

three points consensus. First foreign secretary level meeting between Bangladesh and Myanmar was held virtually on 20 January 2021 under the mediation of China. Bangladesh proposed to maintain the presence of international community in Rakhaine State when repatriation occurs. Myanmar and China agreed on the proposal and it was confirmed in a virtual trilateral meeting. Bangladesh pushed hard to begin the repatriation and proposed village-based repatriation of the Rohingya to their homeland while Myanmar wanted a sporadic selection of Rohingya and showed logistical arrangements and some physical arrangements for delaying purpose. The pilot project for repatriation of verified displaced persons demanded prospective returnees to fill in and sign the agreed forms containing two points to ensure voluntariness to return and obligation to abide by the existing laws of Myanmar.

Conflicting Relations

2012 sectarian violence in Rakhaine State also pushed Rohingya to Bangladesh that strained the relations of two countries because they have been systematically forced to seek refuge in Bangladesh. The two countries faced stalled diplomatic engagements due to the influx of Rohingyas in 2016 and 2017.The initial verdict of ICJ on 23 January 2020 for adopting provisional measures made the relations turbulent. Troops' deployment near Bangladesh border and Myanamr's security forces' constant torture on left over Rohingyas in Rakhaine State and declaration of emergency in Myanmar fomented the weak relations (Chowdhury, 2023).

Bangladesh raised the Rohingya issue through three flag meetings with the government of Myanmar, but the objections remained unresolved. On 16 September 2022, mortar shells and the firing of bullets fell inside Bangladesh, which seriously concerned Bangladesh. ASEAN diplomats, except Myanmar, were briefed on 19 September 2022 about the violence occured inside Myanmar. It was a safety and security concern for the Rohingya community. The diplomats were also frustrated by the progress of the ASEAN five-point consensus. Bangladesh decided that a fresh influx of Rohingy must be prevented, and for this, Border Guard Bangladesh and Coast Guard were kept alert. Bangladesh has shown silence and protested diplomatically as it follows peaceful means of resolving the issues. Myanmar urged Bangladesh to look after the issue of terrorist elements threatening and intimidating the displaced persons for staying in Bangladesh (Sakib, 2021). Myanmar agreed to take back but did not mention specific date for repatriation. The hearing on the genocidal accusation case at the ICJ, the UN's top court brought Bangladesh and Myanmar in one place on 10-12 December 2019. Gambia, through OIC, has taken Myanmar to the ICJ to keep the momentum to provide justice to Rohingyas. Aung Suu Kyi defended the Myanmar military before ICJ and she never for once referred to the Rohingyas as 'Bengalis' or 'illegal migrants' (Ahmed, 2020).

The Rohingya/FDMNs repatriation process will not start easily and very quickly because of Myanmar's unwilling behaviour, China, Russia, Japan and India's diplomatic support toward Myanmar in international arena, non-fulfillment of demand and lack of safety, security and conducive environment in Rakhaine State in Myanmar. Since Bangladesh made MOU with Myanmar bilaterally very swiftly and at the same time took Myanmar to the ICJ, UN General Assembly and UN Security Council for ensuring justice and expedite repatriation process that is why diplomatic initiatives with Myanmar and tripartite agreement have been a little bit proved ineffective. Myanmar opted to continue talk with western leaders not to impose sanctions and embargo. Myanmar has also been continuing visits, dialogues and discussions with Bangladesh to show the international community its good will about repatriation. Myanmar's 'Think Tank' wants to further the relations keeping the Rohingya issue aside. Considering geo-political situation it is also assumed that Bangladesh is less important to Myanmar than that of china and India.   Military diplomacy did not work much though military of Myanmar had a strong role in resolving the Rohingya crisis before and after military coup in 2021. After 2021 military coup, creation of NUG and strong emergence of AA (Arakan Army) have put the junta government in trouble in the domestic affairs. Amidst the political turmoil and human rights violations, Myanmar has cleared and selected very few persons from different families so that families again become fragmented while they return to Myanmar. Bangladesh/FDMNs will not accept the fragmentation policies of Myanmar. Myanmar has agreed to allow the returnees to go their home village instead of model village after long discussions but there is no assurance of amending land law to get back their ancestors property and ethnic identity. It seems that Myanmar desires Rohingya stay in Bangladesh forever. Rohingya/FDMNs have lack of trust and confidence in the repatriation process and do not want to come back again from Myanmar due to repressions, abuse and killings by security forces in the name of operations. Rohingya voice and diaspora Rohingya could not raise the international concern. It would be very difficult for Bangladesh, international forums and international community to ensure citizenship rights for Rohingya/FDMNs if Myanmar does not amend the 1982 Citizenship Act.

5. Limitation of the Study

Every research has some limitations. This study has not covered the diplomatic initiatives with other countries over Rohingya crisis. In course of the study discussions about other stakeholders have been done to make the study meaningful and consistent. Potential future diplomatic activities based on available literature have not been incorporated. Recommendations are not included because only initiatives of the government of Banglaladesh have been projected in this study.

6. Conclusion

Providing shelter to the oppressed people during the 1970s, 1990s, and 2017 was the cause of Bangladesh's constitutional obligation and foreign policy principles, humanitarian grounds, and respect for international law. Bangladesh offered its land with the hope of quick repatriation and international financial assistance to meet the needs of millions of forcibly displaced Rohingya Nationals/FDMNs. The administrative arrangements, efforts, and resources were used to maintain and control the traumatized Rohingya/FDMNs by Bangladesh. Bangladesh also made a tripartite agreement with Bangladesh, Myanmar, and China in 2018 at Kunming, China. China arranged the first round of negotiation to expedite the start of the repatriation process on 20 January 2022. UNHCR was integrated into the repatriation process in August 2019. Repatriation in 2018 and 2019 has been futile, though verification was done as per the list given by Bangladesh due to the poor human rights situation in Rakhine state, the objection of the international community, the political will of GoM, and the unwillingness of Rohingya/FDMNs.

Bangladesh continued to demonstrate cordial and warm diplomatic relationships with good neighbourliness attitude with Myanmar since the inception of Rohingya crisis. Diplomatic activities with Myanmar over Rohingya crisis in the form of visits, dialogues, agreements and memorandum could not see the light of expectations of Bangladesh. When first diplomatic initiative could not ensure repatriation, Bangladesh launched trilateral and multi-lateral initiatives to create and impose pressure on Myanmar so that repatriation starts early. There prevails sense of mistrust and non-confidence between Bangladesh and Myanmar. In spite of having MOU on Rohingya/FDMNs repatriation, it seems that Myanmar is unwilling to take back its national. Non-compliance of creating conducive environment and stopping human rights violations in Rakhaine state on the part of Myanmar delay the repatriation process. Rejection of amendment of 1982 citizenship law, Covid-19, military coup in 2021, interest of AA and NUG, rulings of both ICJ and ICC as well as uncertainty of safety, security of Rohingya in Myanmar have also caused the uncertainty of repatriation process. It was observed that good and improved diplomatic relationships depend on the peaceful situation of Rohingya habitation in Rakhaine State in Myanmar. The gravity of the crisis, refugees originating and the host country, geo-economic and geo-strategic interests of the international community, state and non-state actors especially, major powers China, India, and the US have made the Rohingya crisis more complex and protracted.

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Correlation and Separation of Feministic Views in Selected Post-modern Novels

Md. Rezaul Karim[*]

Abstract

This article evaluates correlation and separation of feministic views in selected post-modern novels. Feminism is one of the most popular as well as controversial movements of modern time. There are many strong arguments and discourses propagated both in favour of and against feminism. People oppose or preach feminism with unwaveringly opinionated and exclusive attitude with little to no knowledge about its factual aspects and the key tenets. The purpose of this study is, therefore, to present a thorough and precise documentation of feminist concepts and campaigns, to fill up the existing knowledge gap. Using the descriptive narrative technique, it discusses feminism in its liberal, radical, Marxist, cultural, multiracial and eco-friendly forms, its history and its fictional presentation in selected postmodern English novels along with their literary critique from renowned figures, in order to shed light on what it is, and how it is. Thus, it is a well-structured collection of findings and an objective source of information. This research is definitively helpful for the academic readers and common people alike, in that when they take an opposing or allied stance on any of the feminist notions, they can use it as a concise source of knowledge and then do what they do and choose the best suited course of actions for themselves with firm conviction and clarity. Further studies are needed in this area, as there have not been many done about feminism, breaking it down into its constituting separate tenets identifying their causal factors and their correlation and impacts on society.

Keywords: Feminism, correlation, separation, post-modern novels

1. Introduction

Feminism is one of the most popular as well as controversial movements of modern time. There are many strong arguments and discourses propagated both in favour of and against feminism. People oppose or preach feminism with unwaveringly opinionated and exclusive attitude with little to no knowledge about its factual aspects and the key

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tenets. The emergence of feminism can be naturally observed as an inevitable and logical response to the overall socio-political lifestyle of medieval Europe, where women were prevented from owning property, participating in public life, or even being educated. British Parliament allows the voting right for women in 1918, and after the success of women's suffrage movement, the feminist movement alongside its liberal form has appeared time to time with more radical approaches abounding some pressing questions, as to whether feminism want to create full equality or to respond to the needs of women, as the price of equality may result in the absence of protection. The feminist thoughts of the post-modern era are enriching the genre of fictional writing, particularly novels in this century.

Taking into consideration all the advocacy for and against feminism, this research paper investigates the gradual development of all of the phases or waves of feminism along with its historical implications, focusing on the feminist interpretations of selected post-modern novels to create a better understanding of the ground-breaking works of notable post-modern feminist writers, namely, Alice Walker, Toni Morrison, Sylvia Plath, and Anita Desai. The temperate and astute narrative of *The Bell Jar*, written by Sylvia Plath, is dealt as a fine text in analyzing the feminist issues from a moderate viewpoint, which does not disregard the social and moral or religious values altogether or upholding the status of women as mother and wife, but also examines various possibilities and perspectives with genuine curiosity and open mind. Esther, Plath's protagonist, thus becomes a universal representation of young women's confusion and the quest for identity (Badia, 130). Toni Morrison and Alice Walker, both being the feminist writers of African American origin, portray the predicament of the young black girls and women who have to deal with "zero-image" issues both in the contexts of their own family environment and then the society at large. The black women are discriminated against by the black men, and by the white men and the white women, alike. In *The Bluest Eye* and *The Color Purple,* the struggle of Pecola and Celie to create a sense of self and build self-esteem is too intense and poignantly powerful for the readers. *Clear Light of Day*, a feminist novel written by the well-known Indian author Anita Desai, narrates the story of women in the modern-day Indian subcontinent. The range of this study includes a diverse collection of the life-stories of women coming from different backgrounds, cultures and ethnicities, in order to create an all-encompassing and unbiased understanding of the big picture within which the concept of feminism has grown and flourishing (Bannerji, 908).

1.1 Development of the Feminist Schools of Thought

The aim of feminism is not solely focused on establishing the rights of women, but rather feminism endeavours to ensure the equality of the sexes in the society in all of its social, political and economic settings. The

movement of feminism has essentially become an academic, cultural and social movement. In 1837, Charles Fourier first used the term "Feminism", and its usage was to identify the status of women in relation to social progress. It wants to fix the discrepancies among men, women, and non-binary, in terms of civil, ideological, and economic circumstances. Feminism advocates against the traditionally accepted notion of viewing sex and gender as being holistic. Feminism could not be defined in a monolithic definition, because of its ever-changing nature, in order to be coherent and harmonious with the diverse narratives and experiences of different societies (Barry, 2013). Feminist movement covers a number of different schools of thought, which deal with different experiences and ideologies of people with different identities. Therefore, different major types of feminism have arisen from its constant evolution.

1.2 Liberal Feminism or, Mainstream Feminism

Liberal feminism wants to ensure gender equality using legal, political, and social means. It gives the movement an individualistic form and highlights the power of women's choices and actions in ensuring this equality. Liberal feminists also desires social justice, and the protective legislation of workplace benefits for working mothers, eradication of domestic violence, and sexual harassment. It fights for reproductive rights and abortion rights, affordable childcare, and also for the equal inclusion of women in the traditionally male-dominated spheres. Liberal feminism has got its origin embedded in the social contract theory of government which was a product of the American Revolution (Donawerth, pp.535-540). Mary Wollstonecraft and Abigail Adams are among the most notable figures in liberal feminism. But the failure of liberal feminism in achieving its goals to some significant extent, gives rise to an uncompromising form of feminism which attempts to radically change the whole of the social system.

1.3 Radical Feminism

Radical feminism began in 1967 and lasted till 1975. This movement originated from the Civil Rights and Peace Movement (1967-1968). Radical feminism treats the oppression of women as one of a kind in its most fundamental form, which women face everywhere irrespective of all of their identifying factors, ethnic origins, race, economic status, or culture. Radical feminists view patriarchy as being the fundamental component of the society in all of its social structures and institutions. Radical feminists challenge this order which prioritizes male experiences, identifying it as designed to dominate women and as the root cause of their oppression. They believe that the only way to free women from occupying a subservient role in the society, is the complete reformation of the societal system (Friedman, 465). Because, gender roles are inseparably knitted in the fabric of social structures and institutions, and so they cannot be removed

without the elimination of the whole system. However, radical feminism instigates many other significant notions of feminism and its ideas are applied there with modifications.

1.4 Marxist and Socialist Feminism:

Socialist feminism is born out of the combination of radical feminism and Marxism. Echols likens socialist feminism to a marriage between radical feminism and Marxism, where the dominant partner is the latter one. According to socialist feminism, capitalism serves the interests of the hierarchical system of the patriarchal society. It is necessary to completely overhaul the capitalistic economic system to ensure women's empowerment and gender equality and put an end to oppression in all forms, including the oppression of women. Marxist feminism draws a connection between the economic dependency of women and women's oppression. They identify the capitalistic or private property system as being the reason behind this situation. Socialist feminists consider the oppression of women to be a complex mixture of various factors, where many psychological, social, and economic factors remain inextricably intertwined (Joseph, 25).

1.5 Cultural Feminism

When the movement of radical feminism subsides, the new concept of cultural feminism flourishes. During the 1960s, after the failure of the movements which call for social change, feminists try to look for an appropriate substitute for the dominant society. Cultural feminism is focused on vanguardism and is willing to construct a women's culture uniting all women, so as to avoid that what they cannot change by resorting to radical feminism. Cultural feminists believe that men and women have their unique and distinct ways of approaching the issues of the world. They claim the approach of women to be the superior one and ascribe greater value to that. Thus, cultural feminism primarily associates many fine qualities with women and celebrates them (Leavy, 520). The attributes of being comparatively gentler and kinder are associated with women as being inherent in their nature. Cultural feminism maintains that if the claim of many to see the differences of sexes as not biologically fixed be acknowledged, still these differences are so conspicuously deep-rooted that it is impossible to dissolve them.

1.6 Eco-Feminism

Eco-feminism discusses topics related to women in connection with the earth and the natural world. It is more of a spiritual theory of feminism than theoretical or political, and mixed with environmentalism. It draws connection between women and nature in religions, cultures, literature, history and iconography. Vegetarianism and the worship of goddesses are

some characteristic parts of it. Eco-feminists maintain that hierarchical or patriarchal societies employ similar kind of controlling approaches regarding women and the nature. Eco-feminism views the concept of a healthy planet as being an integral part in achieving true equality, and so it makes the preservation of natural resources its priority (Lees, 705). According to echo-feminism, patriarchal societies have become causes of destruction and exploitation for environment, resources, and animals, as well as for women.

1.7 Black Feminism

Black feminism takes into account the unique condition of black women in the context of a white-dominated capitalist Western society. Prior to this, both the first wave and the second wave of feminism failed to be inclusive for black women. Moreover, in a patriarchal society the liberation movements of black people from the early periods were also male-dominated. The National Black Feminist Organization began its journey in 1973, to deal with the incidents of discrimination regarding gender and race. Its motto was to make sure that the demands and pledges of mainstream civil rights movements would not undermine their rights to act as autonomous individuals and equal human beings.

Multiracial Feminism: Multiracial feminism tries to create awareness about how race becomes an influential factor in gender construction and discrimination. It provides a feminist perspective for the socially marginalized groups, such as, Latin American, Asian, and black people.

2 The Origin and the Waves of Feminism

The development of this significant movement is simplified in waves for better understanding. "Waves" is the metaphor generally used in connection with feminism. It is not without flaw, as it can oversimplify the complicated history of feminism with all its diverse values, ideas and people that are often in conflict with one another. With this simplification, it can be assumed that the history of feminism is just as straightforward and simple in its development. But in reality it is much more complicated (Watkins, 2000). Feminism has many sub-movements which grew out of one another and these movements are often in conflict. The waves are a good starting point, as they provide the gist of the whole story. Based on the common opinion, there are four waves of feminism:

2.1 The First Wave

The feminist ideals existed long before the first wave of feminism which began in the late 19th century. But it is considered the first real political movement for the Western world. Mary Wollstonecraft's

Vindication of the Rights of Woman (1792) served as a revolutionary inspiration for women to fight for their rights. In 1848, at a gathering in a church, a group of women presented 12 resolutions, asking for specific rights, including the right to vote. Reproductive rights were also among the concerns of early feminists. In 1920 the 19th Amendment was finally passed by the Congress, which gave women the right to vote. And it took years of activism for the early feminists to achieve this success. In New Zealand, women were allowed to vote almost 30 years earlier than the passing of the 19th amendment in the United States. The first wave feminists were inspired by the abolition movement. The goal of the first wave of feminism was fairly simple: the recognition of women as human beings, instead of the unfortunate treatment of women as property and the objectification of women.

2.2 The Second Wave

The second wave feminism is the women's movement of the 1960s and 1970s. The second wave took a lot of inspiration from the Civil Rights Movement and the protests against the Vietnam War. The activists denounced the institutions which were holding women back. They took a closer look at the causes behind women's oppression, and questioned the traditional gender and family roles. Queer theory gained more popularity at this time. Equal Pay Act of 1963, *Roe V. Wade* in 1973, and some other Supreme Court cases were included among the major achievements of the movement at the time. Mainstream/liberal, radical, and cultural feminism were the three leading types of feminism of the time. Critics agreed that the second wave feminism only benefitted, and was basically limited to, white, college-educated women (Tobin, 2022).

2.3 The Third Wave

The institutional victories of the second wave feminism brought more rights and power to women in the 1990s. This allowed them to finally breathe, and pay attention to other aspects of their identity. They welcomed individuality and rebellion. Women from this time got the confidence to freely express their sexuality in their manner of speech, dress and action. Many of the second wave feminists were bewildered by this, as they resisted traditional femininity. The third wave paid emphasis on the racial discrepancies within gender, which the mainstream first and second wave feminism had largely ignored. By the time the internet became more commonplace, it became even easier for the feminists to share their perspectives and ideas with the world. Thus, it resulted in the expansion of feminism.

2.4 The Fourth Wave

According to some, the third wave of feminism continues to these days and the fourth wave is nothing more than the continued growth of the movement. Nevertheless, the MeToo movement and the renewal of attacks on women's rights made many believe in the start of a new wave. The fourth wave of feminism continues to give importance to intersectionality. Critics of "white feminism", which is exclusive of the unique struggles of women of color, point out the fact that the suppression of non-white feminists and feminist notions still continues to these days. Trans-women's right to be included in feminism is a major concern of many fourth wave feminists. This struggle is caused by a group of feminists' unwelcoming attitude towards the trans-women. The term TERF (Trans-Exclusionary Radical Feminist) is often used to refer to this group of feminists. The fourth wave is complex because of the complementary and clashing movements that it encompasses (Showalter, 179).

3. Feminism in Selected Post-modern English Novels

Feminist novels deal with female characters who are in their search for self-agency and its resulting clash with the traditional masculinist and patriarchal society. The feminist critics investigated the historical connection of the images, themes and plots of such feminist fictions, which reoccur in the writings of female writers, with the real-life social and psychological experiences of women in a male-dominated culture. One of such recurrences is the image of a caged bird, which is often interpreted to symbolize the suppression of female creativity and their physical and emotional imprisonment by the patriarchal society (p.201). Critical analyses of the aesthetic values of the novels known as the classics, resulted in a newly defined genre of feminist novels. Roxane Gay states:

> A feminist novel, then, is one that not only deals explicitly with the stories and thereby the lives of women; it is also a novel that illuminates some aspect of the female condition and/or offers some kind of imperative for change and/or makes a bold or unapologetic political statement in the best interests of women...A feminist novel explores what it means to not only be a woman, but to be a woman from a certain time and place. It explores the question of identity— the stories of who we are. (Gay 2014)

Tony Morrison is one of America's foremost novelists. In her writings, she acutely analyzes the dynamics of race and gender. Her notable works include, *The Bluest Eye* (1970), *Sula* (1973), *Song of Solomon* (1977), *Beloved* (1987). Similar to Morrison, Alice Walker writes about the cultural inheritance of African Americans through the examination of universal moral issues. Walker celebrates the accumulation of supportive communities of women. She is known for her Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, *The Color*

Purple. It is an epistolary novel, which deals with the struggles of the characters to express their feelings of identity, from the point of view of the African American experience. In her writings, Anita Desai deals with the female experience in the traditional Indian society. *Cry, the Peacock* (1963), *Fire on the Mountain* (1977), *Clear Light of Day* (1980), and *Fasting, Feasting* (1999) are included among her notable works. Sylvia Plath, a postmodern poet and novelist, chose womanhood in every field of her life, including her poetry, to oppose the male domination that obstructed female achievement (Rosenfelt, 78).

The Bell Jar can be interpreted using Betty Friedan's notion of the feminine mystique. The feminine mystique is the idea that women's fulfilment lies solely in marriage, children and the maintenance of household. Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* and Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar* are their prominent works, written in 1963. Both works are associated with the second wave of feminism (Plain, 2007)). Similarly in *The Bell Jar* Plath gives her character distaste for marriage and an ambition for masculine professions. In fact, in the 1950s American society, the "masculine" professions taken by the women during the wartime were being considered inappropriate for them, and dishonouring for their husbands. Women's career, higher education and political rights were considered unfeminine. Thus, *The Bell Jar* delivers the powerful message of women's desperation to reach their full potentials as complete human beings, instead of having their biological function as their one and only duty.

Plath shows the hypocrisy of the role of husbands and wives, where men are given the ultimate freedom of leading double lives. This inclination of Plath is in accordance with the modern feminism. But, Plath rejects the tropes of modern feminism by criticizing their antithetical values to her through the characterization of Esther. The men in the novel are either simpletons or, villainous in nature. Buddy Willard writes cringe worthy poems, and Esther's date, Marco, attempts to sexually assault her at the first given opportunity. The novel negatively portrays the Victorian notions of marriage through Buddy Willard, who changes into a stranger in Esther's eyes, despite her knowing him from a young age. The society's convictions regarding gender roles influence Willard to become an upholder of patriarchy who wants his wife to be nothing more than an extension of himself (Bloom, 2009).

Tony Morrison introduced a new chapter in American literature with the inclusion of the young black girls at the centre of her stories. She presents the views of black feminism in her novel *The Bluest Eye.* Black feminism being the product of the exclusive attitude of the mainstream feminism towards the African American women, deals not only with women's gender discrimination, as in *The Bell Jar,* but also with racism, which is one of the enabler of such oppression of the women of colour. *The*

Bluest Eye sheds light on the pathetic condition of women in the African American community in America, as well as, the struggle of women from such society with their body image, within a culture that is dominated by White values and points of view (Plain, 2007).

Similar to *The Bluest Eye,* Alice Walker's 1982 novel *The Color Purple* deals with black feminism. But the novel ends with a more positive note than *The Bluest Eye.* Alice Walker depicts the pains and challenges young Black women face in their environment which is plagued with racism and sexism, and the strategies women take to get rid of such conditions. Walker portrays how women can build each other up by hearing out each other's narratives. If women find their voice, the social equality, economic gains, political positions of all sexes and gender groups will be established. Just as in *The Bluest Eye,* the female characters from *The Color Purple* are also abused within their family and in marriage, and they are raped by their close relatives. Like Pecola, Celie is raped by her own father. The male characters in the novel are stereotypically dismissive of women, and they use their prestigious position and gender roles to dominate women. Opinionated and independent women are a source of their insecurity. In the novel, Walker shows how women are willing to build positive friendships among themselves, to share their experiences, problems and stories, and how their fellow feelings and sympathy help them to find their voice. This is in accordance with the notion of feminism as it sources new ideas to resist oppression and abuse (Waugh, 2012). It is shown in the novel that the polygamous marriages succeed because of the positive relationship between women. They can come up with better plans to deal with the issues they face, and to decide the best course of action. The friendship between Shug and Celie is an example of such relationships. This relationship helps Celie to find redemption and gain determination to work for her personal goals and ambitions.

Walker addresses the big issue of marriage in her contemporary society in the novel. Women in the novel are abused at home, abused in their marriage, and forced to marry strangers. Celie goes through such loveless, abusive marriage. The women who fight for equality face many diverse obstacles. For example, Harpo is insecure about Sofia's opinionated nature, and tries to punish her for it. Shug emerges as a confident woman who is ready to stand up to male domination; unfortunately this makes her unable to have happiness at home.

Alice Walker manages to depict much of the state of consciousness black women sought in America, in the 20th century. This representation resonates with the issues that led to the development of personal awareness. The novel also intends to explain why women empowerment and equality are not yet where they are needed to be, through its insights and developments. With the pain and challenges women have to face, a new

form of discussion emerges, which highlights existing issues in order to promote superior initiatives for pursuing feminist ideals (Donawerth, 536).

Not unlike *The Bell Jar,* Anita Desai's *Clear Light of Day* deals with the issue of women's identity crisis. In a social structure with set gender roles, the characters from both novels struggle to decide what they should prioritise, their ambitions or, their desire to have a family. Anita Desai addresses the controversy of women's roles in society and she exposes the hardships that women have to go through as a result. Desai demonstrates how women still have not achieved social equality and they are constantly fighting the social roles that they are forced to obey. In the novel, Raja and Bimla are similar in their independent nature and merits, but Bim's ambition to reach her goals is dampened by the fact that she can never have the same independence the men of their creed enjoy. Post-colonial writers from India conceptualize women as symbolic of nation and its culture, through myths that are sustained by the patriarchal society, in order to subjugate women to the norms of womanhood. The evidence of myths that embody women as a nation can be found in the mythical figures, such as, Sita, Savitri, or Draupadi. Through this, the social contract of India clearly expected women to show loyalty and faithfulness to their husbands. In the myths, Sita followed her husband to exile, and Savitri brought back her husband from death against the divine decree.

The character of Bim is most significant in the novel. Unlike the other female figures from the novel, Tara, the Misras girls or Aunt Mira, Bimla does not give in to the traditional model of women. Desai shows several instances in the novel to impart Bim's struggle to accept women's marginalization in society. She continuously attempts to break away from the restrictions that prevent equality. In a scene, Bimla and Tara are aware of the fact that they are doing something they are not supposed to do, this suggests the rules set for them by the society to behave like ladies and accept the feminine qualities which shape them into good daughters, wives and mothers. Bimla feels restricted by the societal expectations that force feminine qualities on her, as this suppresses her individuality. The Misra sisters differ from Bimla in their typical Indian women's qualities, they stay at home and show servitude to their men. When a boy flings a pebble at a beehive, bees sting Bimla. Just as the women who seek equality and go against the rules of patriarchal society are often made to pay for it. This scene foreshadows the sacrifices that Bimla has to make to be independent. Although, Bimla does not want the traditional role of wife and mother and despite her assertiveness the role that she plays can be dubbed as quite contradictory, because she accepts the women's job of looking after the household and other domestic responsibilities anyway, and quite voluntarily as well. In fact, she turns out to be a motherly-figure to Baba. This can be aligned with women's dilemma about their condition (Blain, 1990).The male characters in the novel display the male perspective of Bimla.

Although Bimla and Raja grow up together, Bimla displays her independent choices and individuality, which gives her distinction from Raja. She does not conform to all of Raja's ways of thinking. Tara's characterization, on the other hand, demonstrates quite the opposite qualities of Bimla. She returns to her domestic home to ensure cultural continuity. But her actions seem forced and nothing but the actualisation of Bakhul's wants, rather than her own wishes. After, her marriage Tara is molded by Bakhul to be his perfect wife, and as a consequence Tara loses her self-identity and determination. The liberation that she wanted to attain by escaping her old domestic home and limited small world is still a foreign idea to her, in her marital home in America. Tara's reliance on her husband is a result of her lack of self-determination. The author has not made it clear what Bimla's fate might be. *Clear Light of Day* presents the real-life crisis of women in India to the readers. And therefore, the storyline of *Clear Light of Day* is similar to *The Bell Jar, The Bluest Eye,* and *The Color Purple,* as it presents grounds for discussion, to resolve the gender issues by locating the root of the problem.

4. Conclusion

To conclude, feminism as a movement may be fairly new, but it has its roots in the earliest time of civilization. Women had for a long time been fighting for their basic needs as human beings. Feminism as a movement that believes in the political, economic and cultural equality of women, started as the result of a long history of struggle that women had to go through from the time when they did not have a voice, till the time when their voices were too loud to be ignored. The development of feminism had never been a smooth process. It was the first step that led to the flood that washed over the structure of patriarchy. In relation to the use of literature as the means of preaching their message, novels have always been a powerful genre for women to voice their exigencies in a form that does not confront the reader directly, but makes them see all the discrepancies, and influences discourses.

The postmodern novelists, Sylvia Plath, Tony Morrison, Alice Walker and Anita Desai do just that. They present the social issues in their novels that are hard to talk about, but demand attention to initiate reformation. The discussed novels are selected from the time frame of the second wave feminism, till the end of the period. Women of the time desperately sought equality and constantly struggled to not conform to, and yet, to experience the familial and social lives. The struggle of inclusion of race, religion, and minority, still perpetuates. It is apparent that feminism is ever shifting in its form. Feminist thoughts have explored everything that is worth exploring. Feminism is expanding in its range, but the central objective remains the same, the establishment of equality in every sphere.

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Curriculum and Evaluation: A Study of HSC Students' Perceptions of the English Examination in Bangladesh

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Abstract

This study investigates the challenges encountered by Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) students in Bangladesh regarding their English examination, with a focus on the alignment between curriculum, teaching practices, and assessment content. The research explores students' perceptions and difficulties related to the current high-stakes testing system, particularly in assessing language skills such as speaking, listening, creativity, and intercultural communication—areas emphasized in the curriculum but underrepresented in the examination structure. The study collected data through a structured 30-item questionnaire (N = 400). The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, The results reveal a significant misalignment between curriculum goals and actual exam practices. Key findings indicate that while students strongly disagreed with the statement that the examination assesses their speaking, listening, or intercultural communication skills, they agreed that grammar, rote memorization, and external help were central to exam success. It recommends curriculum-aligned test reform that integrates communicative, intercultural, and creative components, alongside improved classroom practices that support all four language skills. This research contributes to a growing body of evidence advocating for more authentic, learner-centered language assessments in Bangladesh's secondary education system.
Keywords: assessment, perception, curriculum, misalignment, language, competence

1. Introduction

In modern times, education system and examination system are changed drastically. Examinations today involve high-stakes test and low-stakes test where facing challenges by students is a vital issue. The academic purpose involves a lot of individual components which are evaluated to identify the actual competence of a student. Examinations are a popular tool of assessment for the teachers that help them assess the knowledge and

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skills of students. Different types of examinations based on their educational system are conducted in all educational institutions. Though examinations are an important part of academic studies, they have advantages as well as disadvantages. It depends on the curriculum as well as how a learner deals with examination.

1.1 Background of the Study

No single educational policy as high stakes testing requirements over the past fifty years has a great impact on the teachers and students in public examination in Bangladesh. The implementation of high-stakes testing is one of the most arguable innovations of the education reform in the world. Natriello (2009) claims that high-stake testing has transformed the learning process into studying for tests. Such tests are regarded not only to deteriorate the quality of education, but also to be inefficient in determining the actual achievement of the students. Students have different learning styles, using multiple modes of assessment. Frequent low stakes tests provide the teachers more opportunities to see what students know and can do, and to adjust instruction accordingly. Following the curriculum teachers are aware of completing all items in the syllabus in the classroom in a short time. But learning outcomes of students and preparation of the learners for the HSC high-stakes examination are not considered because no enough time is bound for them. In such cases, it is a matter of thinking that whether a single test is an accurate measure for these purposes.

Although examination is an unavoidable and common tool of testing knowledge and understanding of students it has both advantages and disadvantages. While it is believed that examinations are important to assess students' academic performance, students' knowledge and understanding, they may also create stress and anxiety and may not accurately reflect a student's overall understanding of a subject. These factors should be considered when designing testing strategies and it is important to take steps to minimize the challenges and negative effects of examinations on students' well-being. HSC examination and its assessments sometimes impact teachers and students negatively. Teachers inadvertently teach aiming teaching to the test, engage learners drill-and-practice activities, and encourage them learning by rote. These instructional techniques raise questions about the meaningfulness of education which aims learning. Here learning well is not focused, important is time duration and teachers' instructions. The national curriculum relies on only these assessments to collect data for making decisions with respect to curriculum and instruction. Though HSC curriculum focuses on classroom learning, examination and assessment do not match with classroom learning. All learners try to learn well staying outside the classroom and for doing so they have to face many challenges whereas teachers' and learners' perceptions influence mostly.

English testing impacts teachers and learners in many ways. With the new accountability movement, HSC teachers and learners feel more pressure to obtain high test scores, resulting in new and higher levels of stress. High-stakes testing increases the motivation to learn and promotes mastery of essential skills. In turn, the students receive the test more seriously and work harder. They identify areas of instructive weakness that can be focused on for improvement and reform since this test assesses students once a year. Assessment is always be a part of education. This high- stakes assessment does not take in the consideration of the overall progress of the learners. Excluding topics are not tested or not likely to appear on the test even within tested subjects. It devotes too much classroom time to test preparation rather than learning. Because "teachers have been forced to directly parallel what is being taught to what is found on state mandated tests, they no longer feel the need to tailor their classrooms and classes to meaningful learning activities or stimulating learning environments" (Donlevy, 2000). This test maintains data to know about the school and student performance in the form of numerical test scores. It is significantly used as accountability tools to ensure that all students learn what they are expected to learn. In fact, high-stakes testing aims a heightened concern with test data; thus, teachers are no longer involved in discovering and fostering individual learning styles (Paris, 2000). The study is an attempt to find out the attention of teachers and learners to focus more on alternative assessment and the perceptions and attitudes in EFL teachers, students, and users in general. It is true that "educators and researchers agree that teachers play a key role in making educational reforms successful; as a result, teacher professional development is a major focus of systemic reform initiatives" (Ogan-Bekiroglu, 2009, p. 2).

The purpose of this study is to explore the challenges of learners and perceptions of learners and teachers associated with HSC English examination. The study also determines how HSC English high- stakes testing increases challenges among students and what perceptions regarded this test learners and teachers belong. The study will reveal how the learning outcomes may be increased by the use alternative assessment in higher secondary level in English classes, bringing forward important insights not only for the areas of assessment research, but especially for teachers and researchers and learners. Many different factors are directly related to good language learning assessment.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

High -stakes testing follows traditional assessment techniques at the end of the year. But only one test at the end of the year is incongruous with current EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teaching methods, where learner-centered approaches are more focused. The new curriculum advocates a more student- centered approach in teaching and learning for

EFL classes to the secondary and higher secondary educational institutions. In higher secondary educational institutions students study English language for two years aiming to enable them to be competent in their respective fields of study. But such type of testing is not enough to build multiple dimensions of language learning because it does not increase student motivation; does not change learners' perception and does not provide a clear understanding of student achievement. Dong and Liu (2022) found that learners' perception of test importance significantly impact three types of learning motivation; specifically, learners' perceived test importance exerted medium-sized effects on development motivation and communicative learning motivation and a small effect on requirement motivation. In Bangladesh, many teachers of colleges in EFL courses find that their students do not prepare for or attend class, are minimally engaged, and exhibit poor reading comprehension and writing skills due to lack of proper motivation and due to learners' perceptions towards tests. Learners' perceptions towards test directly affect their learning with time allotment but teachers' support does not favour them always. Following the time allocated in the curriculum of HSC examination, learners' good learning and much time spending on the learners are totally overlooked and avoided by teachers and administrator. On the other hand, to achieve good grades is a great challenge faced by the learners. No frequent testing is in the classroom that improves the learning outcomes of students and prepares the learners for the high-stakes examination.

The teachers do not pay attention due to time limitations. Therefore, students cannot receive good learning, good preparation before appearing at the HSC examination. On the contrary, Students' favourable perceptions of test importance help to build both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Credé and Phillips (2011) told that the perceived importance of tasks (task value) is generally positively correlated with both intrinsic and extrinsic goal orientations/motivation. It is clear that those who realize the importance of their future study, career development and interpersonal communication have a stronger learning desire for promoting their future development and communication, and in doing so, they quicken their stronger intrinsic motive. "Learners' perceptions of test impact positively predicted more frequent learning practices, which has been verified in previous studies in the same context" said Dong (2020). The benefits of high-stakes exams are widely recognized, as they are seen as an objective test for the validation of student learning and not affected by subjective assessment and stereotyping (Burgess and Graves, 2013).

Many researchers commented that high-stakes exams, which are administered centrally, will increase education quality (Jürges,et,al ,2005;Wiliam, 2010; Woessmann, 2018). But only traditional assessment or summative assessment might not be equally applicable to harvest effective

goals and motivation for all types of students. They may not always be the solution to earn equitable educational opportunities for all as they disadvantage students with difficulties to deal with pressure, poorer students who cannot afford private tutoring, labelling children as failures or focusing uniquely on the test curriculum rather than on individual learning needs (Morrison, 2020; The Economist, 2020; Rossiter & Abreh, 2020). Corder (1977) said, "in the end successful language teaching-learning is going to be dependent upon the willing cooperation of the participants in the interaction and an agreement between them as to the goals of their interaction. Co-operation cannot be imposed but must be negotiated (p. 3)." Donlevy (2000) said that "this trend of relying on a single test, especially when it determines such important matters as graduation or matriculation through an educational setting, will begin to shut young people out from higher education and future opportunities." Teaching and assessment methodology are directly a part of education and influenced by learning and teaching styles. HSC examination is   a way to hold students, teachers, and school districts accountability and simultaneously create challenges for all. These tests are designed to help the government so that it can decide the form of punishment, reward, and compensation, if it wants to implement towards a particular educational institution. Examination also has negative effects on students' mental health and well-being. Whether positive or negative, enlightening or subversive, the examination is the only major measurement tool available in Bangladesh for stakeholders such as parents, teachers, policymakers for educational achievement. It is vital to bring some positive changes in the HSC examination.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

Testing is creating such a learning environment where learners are being marginalized because of some factors out of their control, and they are generating less student-teacher interactions. Being influenced by the factors, teachers are focusing their attention on students likely to pass the standardize tests, and ignoring students who are academically struggling the most. The objectives are to:

1. determine the HSC level students' perceptions of their English examination at the end of their two years programme.
2. detect the difficulties that the HSC level face in taking their English examination at the end of their two years programme.
3. examine the alignment of the HSC English examination with the relevant curriculum; and
4. explore the alignment of the HSC English examination with teaching *English for Today* ,book for xi and xii.

2. Review of Literature

Smith and Williams (2019) explored the alignment between high school curricula and final examinations, noting that students generally perceive exams as a valid reflection of what is taught. Brown and Green (2020) examined the effectiveness of assessments in English exams and highlighted variability in students' perceptions, which aligns with the mixed responses observed in this study regarding reading skills assessment. Zhou and Lyu (2021) also found variability in students' views on whether their reading skills were adequately assessed, a pattern reflected in the current data. Jackson and Lee (2018) noted that while many students are confident in their reading abilities, some still face challenges, which resonates with the findings on the difficulty of reading passages. Hamid and Honan (2012) critiqued the Bangladeshi system for neglecting speaking and listening skills in assessments, a sentiment echoed in the findings on speaking and listening assessments. Ali and Walker (2014) discussed the emphasis on rote learning and grammar rules rather than functional communication, a view supported by the majority of students in this study who felt the exam did not assess real-world communication. Rahman and Pandian (2018) also identified the disconnect between curriculum goals and examination practices, particularly regarding speaking and listening skills, reinforcing the findings of this study. Choudhury (2010) critiqued the grammar-focused nature of the Bangladeshi exams, which mirrors students' concerns about the inadequacy of grammar coverage.

Rahman, Akter, and Yesmin (2019) identified grammar proficiency as a significant challenge in language exams, which is reflected in students' perceptions of the difficulty of grammar tasks. Pang (2008) emphasized the role of writing tasks in assessing cognitive abilities, aligning with the study's finding that writing tasks were not perceived as the most challenging component of the exam. Facione (2015) highlighted the importance of critical thinking in education, a view supported by the students' responses regarding critical thinking development. Schunk, Pintrich, and Meece (2008) focused on the importance of grades in motivating students, which is consistent with the study's finding that securing good grades was a primary motivation for students. Willingham (2017) discussed the role of preparation time in reducing exam-related stress, a factor reflected in the study's findings on students' perceptions of preparation time. Russell and Peddle (2019) examined how time management and self-regulation can reduce exam stress, aligning with the findings on time pressure. Miller (2015) discussed the importance of language proficiency in technical education, a view reflected in students' agreement that the English exam assesses language skills for technical education.

3. Research Methodology

It employs quantitative method to address a research problem and to achieve its objectives. The respondents were selected from eight divisions of Bangladesh. A questionnaire survey was conducted among 400 Honours' First Year students including male and female learners who passed HSC Board Examination, so that the perceptions to the examination, its nature, purposes, difficulties, relevance in the context, etc. might be revealed. The participants passed the HSC Examination from different colleges and the colleges were administered by different boards but their HSC curriculum and board questions pattern were similar as the curriculum is provided by the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB).

4. Findings

The research examines students' perceptions of the alignment between the syllabus content, classroom learning, and the examination. A total of 30 questions were analyzed, covering various aspects of the English exam, including reading and writing skills, grammar, speaking and listening assessment, creativity, critical thinking, and the students' perceived stress and preparation.

Syllabus Coverage

The first question in the survey explored whether the HSC English examination adequately covers the syllabus content taught during the two years of study. The results from the analysis suggest that the majority of students feel the examination aligns well with the syllabus. With a mean score of 4.485, which is close to the highest possible score, and a standard deviation of 0.500, students' responses were highly consistent. This is reflected in the mode and median values of 4, indicating that most students agree that the examination adequately covers the taught content. The narrow distribution and low variability in responses suggest that the alignment between the syllabus and the examination is generally accepted by the students. This finding corroborates existing studies, such as Smith and Williams (2019), who reported a similar consensus in their research on the alignment between high school curricula and final examinations. Overall, students perceive the exam as a valid reflection of the syllabus content, which suggests that the examination is fulfilling its intended purpose of assessing the curriculum.

Reading Skills Assessment

When students were asked whether the examination assesses the English reading skills they learned in the classroom, the results showed a mean score of 3.86, indicating general agreement. However, there was some variability in responses, as reflected in the standard deviation of 1.07. The mode and median values were both 4, suggesting that most students agreed with the statement. The histogram showed some negative skewness, indicating that while the majority of students agreed, a small proportion disagreed or felt the assessment could be improved. These findings align with studies such as Brown and Green (2020), which highlighted variability in student perceptions about the relevance of exams to classroom learning. Despite the variability, the majority of students felt that their reading skills were adequately assessed in the examination, although there is room for improvement.

Difficulty of Textbook Readings

In response to whether students find reading passages in the textbook difficult to understand for the examination, the majority disagreed. The mean score of 2.68 suggested that students did not perceive the reading passages as particularly challenging. The mode and median values of 2, which represent "disagree," reinforced this conclusion. However, there was moderate variability in responses, as shown by the standard deviation of 1.038. The positive skewness value indicates that while most students found the passages manageable, a significant number still faced challenges with certain readings. This aligns with the findings of Jackson and Lee (2018), who noted that while many students are confident in their reading skills, some still struggle with specific texts. These findings suggest that the reading passages are generally accessible but may still present difficulties for certain students, particularly those from disadvantaged educational backgrounds.

Writing Skills Assessment

The next question focused on whether the examination assesses the writing skills learned in the classroom. The mean score of 3.55 indicated that students slightly agreed with the statement. However, the standard deviation of 1.046 and sample variance of 1.0947 reflected some variability in responses. The negative skewness of -0.878 suggested that most students leaned towards agreeing that their writing skills were assessed, but there was some disagreement from a portion of respondents. These results are consistent with previous research by Brown and Green (2020), which

pointed out that while writing skills are generally assessed in exams, certain dimensions of writing proficiency may not be fully captured. This suggests that while the examination does assess writing skills to some extent, it may not cover all the aspects of writing proficiency that students encounter in the classroom.

Inclusion of Writing Parts

When asked whether the examination includes questions on writing parts (such as composition, paragraphs, letters, and story writing) from the textbook, the response was overwhelmingly negative, with a mean score of 1.805. This suggests that most students feel that writing sections from the textbook are not adequately represented in the examination. The mode and median values of 1, indicating "strongly disagree," further support this perception. The positive skewness of 1.274019 indicates that most students felt the exam did not cover writing tasks from the textbook, with a small number indicating some level of agreement. These findings align with the work of Smith et al. (2019), which suggested that students often feel that key aspects of their textbook content, including writing tasks, are underrepresented in final exams. The exclusion of writing tasks from the textbook in the examination may limit students' ability to demonstrate their full writing potential.

Memorization for Writing Tasks

Students were also asked whether they believed they could complete writing tasks such as compositions and paragraphs without relying on memorization. The mean score of 3.61, which falls between "neutral" and "disagree," indicates that while most students feel they can not write without memorizing, a significant number still feel some reliance on memorization. However, the standard deviation of 0.948 suggests moderate variability in the data, indicating that some students either agree or are neutral on the issue. The negatively skewed distribution further supports the conclusion that the majority of students do not feel the need to memorize, but there remains some reliance on memorized responses. This finding is consistent with the views of Chen (2014), who observed that memorization is a common strategy for many students in language exams. These results suggest that the examination format may still encourage rote memorization, which could limit the development of students' original writing skills.

Challenges in Writing Tasks

When asked whether writing tasks, such as compositions, paragraphs, and letters, were the most challenging part of the examination, the mean score of 2.195 suggested that most students disagreed with the statement. The mode and median values of 2 (disagree) reinforced this conclusion. Students did not perceive writing tasks as the most difficult part of the exam, with most respondents finding other components of the exam more challenging. The low standard deviation of 0.91 and the relatively narrow range of responses indicate that students' views on this issue were largely consistent. These findings are in line with research by Purdie and Hattie (2002), who noted that while writing tasks are an important part of language assessment, they are not typically seen as the most difficult by students. This suggests that, while writing tasks may present challenges for some, they are not considered the most formidable aspect of the HSC English examination.

Speaking Skills Assessment

The issue of speaking skills assessment was a major point of contention in the study. Students overwhelmingly felt that the examination did not assess their speaking skills, with a mean score of 1.24. Both the mode and median values of 1 (strongly disagree) indicated a strong consensus among students that speaking was not evaluated in the examination. The standard deviation of 0.43 and the narrow range of 1 further emphasized the uniformity of students' perceptions. This finding aligns with previous critiques of the Bangladeshi examination system, which has been criticized for its focus on grammar and reading-writing tasks while neglecting oral skills (Hamid and Honan, 2012). The exclusion of speaking assessments from the exam may be limiting students' development of essential communicative skills, which are crucial for both academic and professional success.

Listening Skills Assessment

Similarly, students overwhelmingly felt that the examination did not assess their listening skills, as indicated by the mean score of 1.255. The mode and median values of 1 (strongly disagree) reinforced this conclusion. The standard deviation of 0.436 and the range of only 1 suggest that students' perceptions were highly concentrated around the belief that listening skills were not evaluated. This result aligns with Hamid and Baldauf (2008), who criticized the exclusion of listening and speaking assessments in the Bangladeshi examination system. The lack of listening

assessments in the HSC English examination further highlights the disconnect between the curriculum's communicative goals and the examination's design.

Real-Life Communication Assessment

When asked whether the examination assesses effective communication in real-life situations globally, the majority of students disagreed, with a mean score of 1.61. Both the mode and median values of 2 (disagree) reinforced this perception. The standard deviation of 0.488 and the narrow range of 1 suggest that most students felt the exam did not assess their ability to communicate effectively in global contexts. This finding reflects the ongoing criticism of the examination system's lack of emphasis on communicative competence and real-world language use, as noted by Ali and Walker (2014). The absence of real-life communication assessments may limit students' ability to apply their English language skills in practical settings, hindering their preparedness for higher education and international engagement.

Local Communication Competence

In a similar vein, students felt that the examination did not assess their ability to communicate effectively in local contexts. The mean score of 1.6575, with both the mode and median at 2 (disagree), suggested a strong consensus that local communication was not evaluated in the examination. The standard deviation of 0.50 and the range of only 2 further emphasized the uniformity of students' perceptions. This finding is consistent with Rahman and Pandian (2018), who pointed out the gap between the curriculum's communicative objectives and the assessment system. By not assessing local communication competence, the HSC English examination overlooks an important aspect of language use that is critical for students' success in professional and social settings.

Grammar Coverage and Challenges

Regarding the inclusion of necessary grammar in the examination, the data showed a relatively neutral perception among students (mean = 2.91). A significant portion of students felt that grammar was not adequately covered, which is supported by the standard deviation of 1.03. In the case of grammar challenges (Q14), a mean score of 3.6975 suggested that most students found the grammar sections of the exam moderately difficult. Both of these findings highlight the ongoing challenges students face with grammar-related tasks and point to the need for more effective grammar instruction in the classroom.

Vocabulary Acquisition and Literary Content

Students felt that they did not acquire enough vocabulary through their HSC studies (mean = 2.15), with many disagreeing with the statement about vocabulary learning. This limited vocabulary acquisition is compounded by the perceived lack of literary content in the examination (mean = 1.39), suggesting a disconnect between the curricular goals and the actual content assessed in the exam.

5. Conclusion

The findings of this study reveal a number of critical gaps between the HSC English examination and the educational goals outlined in the national curriculum. While the examination aligns with the syllabus content to some extent, it falls short in assessing key language skills such as speaking, listening, and real-world communication. Furthermore, the emphasis on rote memorization, grammar, and vocabulary learning over communicative competence, creativity, and critical thinking highlights the need for a more holistic approach to language assessment. These findings underscore the necessity of revising the examination system to better reflect the aims of communicative language teaching and to prepare students for real-world language use.

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The Realm of Theories and Principles: A Book Review of *Introducing Second Language Acquisition*

Badhan Moni[*]

Abstract

This paper aims to present a review of the book Introducing Second Language Acquisition (3rd ed.), authored by Muriel Saville-Troike and Karen Barto (2017). The purpose of the article is to provide short descriptions of the theories and principles of second language acquisition for readers who require a quick overview of the principles of second language acquisition for general understanding, teaching, and research purposes. The seven chapters of the book were reviewed using a descriptive design. This article begins with an overall introduction to the book, followed by a comprehensive analysis of the book's content by presenting a summary of each chapter. A conclusion is offered at the end. This paper has implications for interested readers, graduate and postgraduate students, novice teachers, and budding researchers in the field of SLA.

Keywords: Second Language Acquisition (SLA), Book Review, SLA Theories, Frameworks, L2 Learning

1. Introduction

Introducing Second Language Acquisition (3rd ed.), authored by Muriel Saville-Troike and Karen Barto (2017), is a beginner's guide to the study of second language acquisition (SLA). It is primarily aimed at undergraduate and graduate students who have limited or no prior knowledge of linguistics. The book aims to orient students with a fundamental understanding of SLA phenomena, ignite their interest in SLA, and offer recommendations for further study. Additionally, it intends to offer practical assistance to second language learners and aspiring teachers. The book is divided into seven chapters, and each chapter opens with a preview of the main points and some key terms discussed in the chapter. Further, every chapter ends with a summary of the chapter and some activities for self-classification and practice. Each chapter closes with a reading list for enthusiastic readers. At the end of the book, there are some sections on the answer guide for self-study, glossary, references, general

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index, and language index, offering readers a handy method for self-verification and exploration. The third edition of the book offers updated content and references. All the chapters accommodate a lot of fundamental concepts, theories, and practices of SLA, with ample examples centred on three key questions: what, how, and why, which contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the readers.

2. Contents of the Book

Chapter 1: Introducing Second Language Acquisition

Firstly, the introductory chapter introduces some basic terms such as SLA, second language, first language, and diversity in learners and learning. SLA refers "both to the study of individuals and groups who are learning a language after learning their first one as young children, and to the process of learning that language" (Saville-Troike & Barto, 2017, p. 2). The additional language is commonly known as a second language (L2), regardless of its position in the sequence of languages taught or learned. L2, often known as the target language (TL), is any language that learners strive to acquire. SLA refers to the examination of both informal L2 acquisition, which occurs in a natural environment, and formal L2 learning, which takes place in educational settings. Additionally, SLA investigates L2 learning that involves a combination of both of these scenarios. The writers subsequently outline three inquiries aimed at comprehending the mechanisms of SLA and admit the absence of a unanimous agreement among academics concerning the resolutions to these inquiries: "What exactly does the L2 learner come to know? How does the learner acquire this knowledge? Why are some learners more successful than others?" (Saville-Troike & Barto, 2017).

SLA can be approached from various angles by scholars. For example, linguists focus on the characteristics of the language, the linguistic competence, and the actual production of learners at different stages of acquisition. In contrast, psychologists and psycholinguists emphasise the cognitive processes that are involved in language learning, as well as the role of the brain in this process. Sociolinguists, on the other hand, highlight the variation in linguistic performance and communication of learners. Social psychologists focus on group-related phenomena like social identity and motivation, as well as the interactional and wider social context of learning. Overall, every field and subfield within the study of SLA utilizes unique techniques to analyse data in research. In other words, they employ diverse theoretical frameworks and arrive at their interpretations of research findings and conclusions in separate manners. Subsequently, the authors make a distinction between a second language, a foreign language, a library language, and an auxiliary language based on the specific context and purpose for which it is acquired. The terms first language, mother tongue,

primary language, and native language are mostly interchangeable as the differences between them are not always clear-cut. Further, they distinguish between simultaneous multilingualism, which refers to the process of acquiring several languages during childhood, and sequential multilingualism, which refers to the acquisition of additional language(s) after the initial language has already been learned.

The acquisition of knowledge and the methods by which it is acquired are contingent upon several factors such as informal interactions with speakers of different languages, immersive environments, or structured education within educational institutions. Several variables, such as linguistic identity, aptitude, personality, motivation, learning tactics, sociolinguistic disparities, group identity, and attitude towards target language speakers, might influence the varying levels of success among language learners.

Chapter 2: Foundations of Second Language Acquisition

The second chapter examines the general aspects of multilingualism, the process of acquiring language, the similarities and differences between learning a first language (L1) and a second language (L2), and the logical challenges of language acquisition. Multilingualism is defined as "the ability to use two or more languages" (Saville-Troike & Barto, 2017, p. 8). Bilingualism refers to the capacity to utilise two languages, whereas multilingualism is specifically used to describe the ability to use more than two languages. On the other hand, monolingualism refers to the ability to use one language. According to the authors, the majority of the world's population is multilingual in this world of 6,000 languages. Cook (1991) distinguishes between multicompetence (the knowledge of two or more languages) and monocompetence (the knowledge of only one language). Though it is obvious that people are showing interest in learning additional languages for a multitude of reasons, there is uncertainty over the precise number of L1 and L2 speakers of a variety of languages because the linguistic information is often not officially collected, answers to questions seeking linguistic information may not be reliable, and there is a disagreement on the definition of terms and the criteria used for identification.

The authors argue that children follow more or less the same process to acquire languages under a subsection. For instance, before reaching six months of age, children can produce all vowel sounds and the majority of consonant sounds found in any language worldwide. By the age of three, children acquire most of the unique sounds specific to their native language. By the age of five or six, children become proficient in most of the fundamental grammatical structures. The authors emphasize children's innate capacity to learn a language, but proper language development does

not occur if language development does not begin before the sensitive period (puberty). Indeed, a child's innate ability alone cannot explain how they acquire such language-specific knowledge. Both natural ability and social interaction are essential to acquiring a language. This chapter includes a table and an explanation of the different stages of L1 and L2 acquisition: the initial state, the intermediate state, and the final state.

In another subsection, the authors mention Chomsky's Universal Grammar (UG) theory to address the logical problem of language learning. The arguments that support UG include the notion that children possess a level of language knowledge that surpasses what they could have acquired solely from their linguistic environment, the inability to learn constraints and principles, and the inability to explain universal patterns of language development based solely on language-specific input. They present a lot of theories in a table, such as Structuralism, Functionalism, Behaviourism, Connectionism, Complexity Theory, Sociocultural Theory, Acculturation Theory, Interactionist Approaches, Computer-Mediated Communication, etc., followed by a brief description of each theory. All of the frameworks address the basic questions of what, why, and how through three different lenses: linguistic, psychological, and social. In addition, they provide short descriptions of each theory and emphasize that no single framework is superior to others, as all are necessary for a comprehensive knowledge of SLA.

Chapter 3: The Linguistics of Second Language Acquisition

The third chapter is one of the most important chapters of the book, which begins with the nature of language and then proceeds to examine several approaches from a linguistic perspective. To the authors, languages are systematic, symbolic, and social. The linguistic knowledge comprises lexicon (vocabulary), phonology (sound system), morphology (word structure), syntax (grammar), non-verbal structures (facial expression, gestures, body language), and discourse. The authors subsequently examine many initial approaches in SLA that emphasize the internal aspect of language production, including Contrastive Analysis (CA), Error Analysis (EA), Interlanguage (IL), Morpheme Order Studies, Monitor Model, and Universal Grammar.

First of all, CA is a method used to investigate SLA by examining and explaining difficulties experienced by learners. This is done by comparing the learner's L1 with L2 to identify similarities and contrasts. This theory was affected by Structuralism and behaviourism. Early advocates of CA hypothesise that language acquisition primarily includes the establishment of habits, which follows a process of Stimulus-Response-Reinforcement (S-R-R). Then, EA concentrates on developing learners' creative capacity to develop language through an internal focus. In EA, a

transition occurs from the behaviourist perspective to the mentalist one. Larry Selinker (1972) used the term Interlanguage (IL) to describe the transitional stages as learners progress towards the desired L2. Some characteristics of an interlanguage include systematic, dynamic, variable, and reduced systems. Next, second language learners have a significant likelihood of experiencing fossilisation, which refers to their tendency to cease further development of their interlanguage (IL) in specific areas before reaching the standards of the target language, even if they continue to receive input in the second language (L2) and invest more time in studying it. Further, the morpheme order studies try to find if there is any natural order of morpheme acquisition. Additionally, the authors critically examine Krashen's (1978) Monitor Model, which is derived from Chomsky's Language Acquisition Device (LAD). The model consists of five hypotheses: the Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis, the Monitor Hypothesis, the Natural Order Hypothesis, the Input Hypothesis, and the Affective Filter Hypothesis. Finally, following the examination of Universal Grammar (UG), which refers to the shared characteristics of all languages, the authors proceed to explore functional approaches that emphasize language acquisition from an external standpoint. These approaches include Systematic Linguistics, Functional Typology, Function-to-Form Mapping, and Information Organization.

The authors conclude the chapter by stating that all the functional approaches share three key points. Firstly, SLA involves the acquisition of a system for expressing meaning. Moreover, the process of language acquisition is significantly influenced by the learner's active participation in communication. Eventually, it is hard to comprehend the processes of SLA without considering the context in which language is used.

Chapter 4: The Psychology of Second Language Acquisition

While Chapter 3 examines the fundamental inquiries of what, why, and how from the linguistic perspective, Chapter 4 focuses on those questions from the psychological perspective. This chapter is organized based on three sub-themes: languages and the brain, learning processes, and differences among learners. The first section of this chapter explores the lateralization of the brain, Wernicke's area, Broca's area, and the Critical Period Hypothesis.

Then, it identifies three major frameworks from the psychological standpoint related to learning processes: Information Processing (IP), Connectionism, and Complexity Theory. All these theories claim that learning a language is like learning other knowledge domains (e.g., Mathematics or driving cars). IP approaches focus on the cognitive processes related to language acquisition and application.

Input	Central processing	Output
Perception	Controlled–Automatic processing Declarative–Procedural knowledge Restructuring	Production

Table 1:Stages of IP (adapted from Saville-Troike & Barto, 2017, p. 79)

Three approaches are identified regarding the order of acquisition: Multidimensional Model, Processibility Theory, and Competition Model. The first model is the Multi-Dimensional Model, which makes several assumptions about how learners acquire grammatical structures in a specific sequence and how this sequence reflects their ability to overcome processing limitations. This model emphasizes that successful language instruction requires mastery of the previous stages' processing operations. The next one is the Processability Theory, proposed by Pienemann in 1998, which identifies and elucidates the order in which processing abilities emerge in the context of language acquisition. Pienemann and Hakansson (1999) propose the acquisitional hierarchy of processing skills as Lemma/word access–Categorical procedure–Phrasal procedure–S-procedure–Class boundary. The final model is the Competition Model (Bates & MacWhinney, 1981; MacWhinney, 2001), which argues that all linguistic performance entails the process of "mapping" between exterior form and interior function. While IP focuses on abstractions of rules or restructuring, the strength of associations between stimuli and responses is the main focus of Connectionism. Complexity Theory, also known as Complex System Theory, Dynamic System Theory, or Chaos Theory, posits that language usage is dynamic (Larsen-Freeman, 2011). The fundamental premise is that all languages, including their different variations, are intricate systems consisting of interrelated elements and phases of language acquisition.

At the end of this chapter, the authors move on to explore "age, sex, aptitude, motivation, cognitive style, personality, and learning strategies" to find the answer to why some learners are more successful than others from a psychological point of view (Saville-Troike & Barto 2017, p. 87). They analyse related literature to elucidate how these factors influence the rate or speed of achievement in L2 learners. This chapter concludes with the effects of multilingualism. For example, bilingual or multilingual children exhibit advantages in verbal and nonverbal abilities, advanced metalinguistic abilities, and control of language processing. They also have advantages in verbal mediation, such as a higher frequency of private-speech utterances.

Chapter 5: Social Contexts of Second Language Acquisition

The fifth chapter provides an in-depth discussion of the three questions of what, how, and why from a social perspective. It starts with communicative competence, which is defined as "what a speaker needs to know to communicate appropriately within a particular language community" (Saville-Troike, 2003). Communicative competence encompasses not only verbal proficiency but also the understanding of when and how to appropriately express oneself in a given context. They discuss the existence of both a language community, which refers to a group of individuals who possess a shared understanding of a particular language, and a virtual community, which is a computer-generated environment where Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) occurs. Following that, the chapter distinguishes between two types of contexts that have an impact on language acquisition: the microsocial and the macrosocial. It then identifies three topics under microsocial factors: L2 variation, input and interaction, and interaction viewed by Socio-Cultural Theory. L2 is highly variable, and the variation of L2 production depends on the communicative context, namely linguistic, psychological, and micro-social. The authors assert the significance of interaction in providing learners with the requisite amount and quality of external linguistic input. According to Socio-Cultural Theory, interpersonal interaction, scaffolding, and intrapersonal interaction play a significant role in language learning through socially mediated activities.

In addition, they investigate how macrosocial notions influence the accounting of L1 and L2's global and national status, group boundary and identity difficulties, institutional forces and limits, social categories, and other factors that impact learning. They explain the power and status of languages at global and national levels by giving examples of the USA and Israel. Linguistic boundaries frequently occur within or beyond national borders, such as in the case of Bengali being spoken by the people of both West Bengal and Bangladesh. Although a national border separates these regions, there is no linguistic barrier between them. Institutional factors and restrictions primarily focus on exerting social control through language, determining who has access to information, and perpetuating linguistic privilege or discrimination. Social categories according to sex, age, ethnicity, occupation, education level, and economic status affect L2 learning. It impacts the types of events individuals encounter, how others see them, and the expectations placed upon them. When individuals start learning a second language (L2), they may encounter different learning environments and encounter different attitudes or opinions from both native speakers and the community of the target language. These experiences may be influenced by their social background. There are some other circumstances of learning, e.g., formal vs. informal or natural vs. instructed, that also influence L2 learning.

Chapter 6: Acquiring Knowledge for L2 Use

The penultimate chapter begins with communicative competence and language use. Both linguistic competence and pragmatic competence are essential to achieving communicative competence in L2. Linguistic competence is defined as "knowledge of the specific components and levels of a language, and knowledge that is required for their appropriate use in communicative activities" (Saville-Troike & Barto, 2017). Pragmatic competence refers to the skill of using language correctly, encompassing the knowledge required to understand and express meaning in various communication contexts. This chapter centres on the necessary linguistic knowledge for various language applications, the methods employed in L2 reading, listening, writing, and speaking activities, and the factors contributing to varying levels of language proficiency among learners.

Based on the purpose of L2 learning, the authors categorize two types of communicative competence, such as academic competence and interpersonal competence. Academic competence refers to the knowledge necessary for studying other subjects, doing scholarly research, or working in a specific professional field. Conversely, interpersonal competence is the knowledge that language learners need to use L2 in real-life situations with other users. Following this are in-depth explanations of the various language knowledge components, including discourse, morphology, phonology, syntax, and nonverbal structures. They then discuss receptive (reading and listening) and productive (writing and speaking) skills. Both receptive and productive skills involve bottom-up and top-down processing. Though the priority of learning skills depends on the purpose of L2 learning, the role of vocabulary and grammar is significant in any case. This chapter concludes with some other aspects of communicative competence, like the knowledge of conversational structure, contextualization cues, and communication strategies.

Chapter 7: L2 Learning and Teaching

The concluding chapter offers readers a comprehensive summary of the responses to those three inquiries from various viewpoints explored throughout the whole book. This chapter effectively consolidates the conclusions from prior chapters, which have explored the questions of what, how, and why from multiple angles. Their main emphasis lies on linguistic contributions when addressing the question of what, psychological contributions when addressing the question of how, and social contributions when addressing the question of why.

Firstly, what L2 learners require to know includes a comprehensive understanding of L2, recognition of recurring patterns, the ability to encode specific concepts, pragmatic competence, proficiency in using L2, the ability to choose among different language systems, and effective

communication skills. Subsequently, they discuss the inherent ability, utilization of previous knowledge, analysis of incoming information, engagement with others, reorganization of knowledge in the second language, establishment of connections, and the development of automaticity in response to the question of how the learner acquires knowledge in the second language. Lastly, the factors that contribute to the variation in success among learners include the social setting, social experience, the link between their first L1 and L2, age, aptitude, motivation, and instruction. This holistic perspective enables readers to comprehend the intricacy of the processes and variables involved in SLA.

The authors then explore how insights from other disciplines can have substantial implications for a wide array of techniques and approaches to L2 instruction and acquisition. Moreover, they emphasize the impact of computer-mediated communication and the Internet on the process of getting information, engaging with others, and assessing communication skills. The chapter concludes by suggesting guidelines for considering the objectives of learning L2, staying informed about current theoretical and updated research developments, and recognizing the strengths and limitations of individual learners.

3. Evaluation

The book is an excellent resource for many reasons. The book reviews a multitude of theories and frameworks for SLA in seven chapters. Though the authors present so many theories in 233 pages, it serves its purpose as an introductory book on SLA. It familiarizes inquisitive readers with the realm of theories and frameworks for SLA.

An outstanding aspect of the book is its focus on three fundamental questions that serve as the central theme for each chapter. The recurring questions serve as cohesive threads that interconnect the concepts throughout the book. Chapter 3 examines these concerns through a linguistic lens; Chapter 4 explores them from a psychological standpoint; Chapter 5 endeavours to address them from a social perspective; and Chapters 6 and 7 adopt an integrated approach to examining these questions. A further advantage of the book is its abundant use of tables and figures, which effectively illustrate the theories and approaches. For example, 'Table 2.3 Frameworks for study of SLA' on page 26 provides a comprehensive overview of theories, hypotheses, and timelines related to the study of SLA from linguistic, psychological, and social perspectives. Further, 'Table 2.4 Perspectives, foci, and frameworks' on page 30 shows most of the theories discussed in the book at a glance. The books also offer readers concise biographies of significant theorists, accompanied by photographs. In this manner, the readers are exposed not only to the theories but also to the individuals who advocate them. In addition, the incorporation of various

colours, specifically diverse variations of blue to emphasize the key topics of discussion, enhances the comprehensibility of the book for the readers.

The readers will certainly appreciate its presentation of intriguing concepts in SLA in an accessible way. For instance, it includes the account of Genie, a rudely treated girl who was found after her puberty, to illustrate the significance of the critical period in language acquisition. Furthermore, it incorporates the tale of describing an elephant from various viewpoints to demonstrate the diverse perspectives from which SLA can be examined, as well as the necessity of an integrated holistic approach to grasp the complex nature of SLA.

4. Conclusion

The authors, like other writers in the field of SLA, acknowledge that there is no universally superior method for learning or teaching L2 (Ellis, 1994; Ellis, 1997; Mitchel et al., 2013). Hence, SLA is perceived as an intricate and multifaceted phenomenon, like a many-sided prism rather than a clear depiction of identifiable entities (Ellis, 1994). There is no single theory or model that can adequately incorporate the range of hypotheses that SLA has addressed. Consequently, multiple theories have emerged, which are both inevitable and acceptable (Ellis, 1997). The authors might have elaborated on each hypothesis to offer readers a comprehensive understanding. Nevertheless, this book has made significant contributions to the realm of SLA by serving as an introductory resource. Therefore, I recommend the book to beginners, including interested readers, graduate and postgraduate students, novice teachers, and budding researchers in the field of SLA.

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The Impact of Shadowing on Improving English Speaking Proficiency among Education Undergraduates

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Abstract

This study aimed at exploring what the undergraduate students of Education at Government Teachers' Training College, Dhaka (TTCD) understood by shadowing; what resources the tutors used in developing students' English-speaking skills; and what strategies the learners used to practise English speaking. Five undergraduate students studying Education at the aforementioned college and a tutor were purposively selected for semi-structured interviews. Separate interview schedules designed for the student participants and the tutor were used to interview the students and the tutor. The major findings of the study showed that the students' understanding of shadowing was watching video clips by the native speakers several times and mimicking the speaker with proper stress and intonation, recoding it with a smart phone and then uploading it in the WhatsApp group for the teachers' and other participants' comments; the tutor used short educative video clips or interesting reels from YouTube; the strategy the participants followed was listening to the audio/video clips uploaded by the tutor and saying the audio/videos again and again until the speaking is similar to the uploaded audio/video, recording it with a smart phone and uploading the recorded audio in the said WhatsApp group.
Keywords: *Education, shadowing, shadowing strategies, speaking skills, undergraduate*

1. Introduction

The ability to communicate fluently in English is an increasingly essential skill for learners in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context.

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Among the various techniques developed to improve listening and speaking skills, the shadowing technique has gained recognition as a powerful and flexible strategy for language acquisition. Shadowing requires learners to listen to spoken language and simultaneously repeat it as closely and clearly as possible. This technique emphasises immediate verbal reproduction of what is heard, pushing learners to focus on rhythm, pronunciation, stress, and fluency in real time.

Tamai (1997) described shadowing as an active and cognitively demanding task, requiring learners to both track incoming speech and vocalise it concurrently. Similarly, Marslen-Wilson (1985) defined it as a real-time repetition task, where the speaker repeats the auditory input almost instantly. From a pedagogical standpoint, shadowing is often employed not only as a listening comprehension tool but also as a technique to develop oral fluency and prosodic awareness. Ekayati (2020) emphasises that shadowing enhances learners' acquisition of prosodic features by immersing them in the target language's natural intonation, stress, and rhythm, making it an effective bridge between listening and speaking. Sumarsih (2017) also pointed out that although shadowing is built on repetition, it goes beyond mere mimicry. Rather, it demands active engagement and quick word recognition, engaging learners in what Hamada (2016) called 'cognitive repetition', a process that deepens the encoding of language through instantaneous comprehension and production.

Further elaborating on this dual nature, Shiki et al. (2010) note that shadowing entails the immediate repetition of verbal expressions, a distinction echoed by Salim, Terasne, and Narasima (2020), who described the technique as one in which listeners must instantly reproduce incoming speech. This simultaneous processing of input and output is what makes shadowing particularly effective in developing speaking fluency. According to Yavari and Shafiee (2019), the technique enhances learners' ability to speak fluidly and naturally, as it reinforces the rhythm and flow of spoken English in a way that traditional drills or delayed repetition do not.

Despite its growing popularity in East Asian and Western contexts, shadowing remains underutilised and underexplored in many South Asian teacher training environments, including Bangladesh. An institution like the Government Teachers' Training College, Dhaka (TTCD) faces persistent resource constraints, limited exposure to native English input, and a lack of innovative instructional practices. However, the low-tech, student-centred nature of shadowing makes it a potentially valuable tool for such settings. The technique requires minimal materials and thus offers a cost-effective solution for improving fluency in a context where there is almost no scope to interact with native speakers of English.

This study investigates the use of the shadowing technique to improve English-speaking skills among undergraduate students of

Education. It aims to explore what students understand by shadowing; what resources the concerned tutor exploits, and how the learners apply the shadowing technique in their learning process. While numerous studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of shadowing in other contexts, limited research has been conducted in the Bangladesh context or teacher education settings. By focusing on this underrepresented context, the study pays attention to a more inclusive understanding of shadowing's applicability across different educational settings.

1.1 Rationale of the Study

Most studies on shadowing have been conducted in technologically advanced or high-resource contexts such as Japan or Latin America. There is almost no evidence of exploiting shadowing in Bangladesh, especially in teacher education and teacher training settings. Furthermore, little is known about how pre-service teachers in such settings perceive and utilise shadowing or how tutors support its implementation. This is why we need to conduct in-depth studies to explore the experiences of TTCD students and their tutor offering valuable insights for improving English speaking skills in different educational contexts.

1.2 Research Questions

This study tried to find answers to the following questions:

1) What do the students understand by shadowing in learning to speak English?
2) What kind of resources do the tutors supply to the learners for speaking practice?
3) What shadowing strategies do the undergraduate students at TTC follow to improve their English-speaking skills?

2. Literature Review

English functions as a lingua franca and is widely used in sectors such as education, technology, business, medicine, and international communication (Qureshi, 2007). As the demand for effective communication in English continues to grow, particularly in countries where English is not the first language, learners face increasing pressure to develop speaking skills. One promising approach that supports speaking development is the shadowing technique. This shadowing technique is categorized as a rehearsal learning strategy that helps students encode and internalize new information (Weinstein & Mayer, 1983). According to Hamada (2019), shadowing is most effective when learners imitate spoken input in real time without referring to written scripts, allowing them to experience authentic language use.

Marslen-Wilson (1985) described shadowing as an activity in which a person listens to spoken language and immediately repeats it word for word. This immediate reproduction trains the listener to process spoken input quickly and efficiently. Similarly, (Lambert 1992, as cited in Yokubova, 2025) referred to shadowing as a paced auditory tracking task that emphasizes real-time repetition without reliance on written text. Kadota (2019) argues that shadowing supports language learning in several ways: it improves listening comprehension, strengthens the phonological working memory, simulates speech production processes, and fosters metacognitive awareness.

Kadota (2007) differentiated between shadowing and repetition from a psycholinguistic standpoint. While repetition allows learners to reflect and rehearse language at their own pace, shadowing requires immediate and spontaneous replication, thereby engaging real-time cognitive processing. Muraoka and Yuka (2019) emphasise that effective shadowing practice involves not only reproducing the words and structures of the language but also imitating prosodic features such as stress, rhythm, and intonation, which are essential for natural-sounding speech and listening comprehension.

Shadowing can be practised simultaneously, where repetition occurs with minimal delay, or delayed, where learners repeat larger chunks of speech. The technique can also be tailored to include visual aids or rely solely on audio input. León and Quichimbo (2024) highlighted the adaptability of shadowing and its usefulness in improving both listening and speaking skills. Nakayama and Armstrong (2015) found that combining visual and auditory input in shadowing tasks helped learners reproduce weak forms in speech more effectively. Similarly, Saito, Nagasawa, and Ishikawa (2011) observed that shadowing aligns with the physical aspects of speech production, involving precise coordination of the vocal tract, tongue, and lips, thereby improving spoken fluency.

Sometimes students are not interested enough in English speaking because there is no test or assessment of speaking (Shill & Islam, 2021). Rosyidi, Paris, and Masyudi (2022) report that students view the technique favourably, citing improvements in motivation, time management, and learning outcomes. Their findings indicate that most students rate shadowing highly across various aspects of their learning experience. Bonilla & A. (2020) noted that learners felt more confident and motivated when they became aware of their progress through shadowing. Teeter (2017) and Hamada (2011b) find that using a self-study shadowing application enhances learners' confidence and interest in English. A substantial body of research supports the claim that shadowing improves speaking skills, particularly in terms of fluency and pronunciation. Regular

shadowing led to more natural speech rhythms and faster speaking rates (Hamzar, 2015; Hamada, 2016: & Saito et al., 2011).

Arboleda et al., (2023) and Sari & Jaya (2025) found that pre-service teachers believed shadowing helped them internalise grammatical structures and imitate native pronunciation more accurately. The average pre-test score of 5.06 rose to 8.81 in the post-test, indicating the technique's strong impact. Tobar Perea (2024) developed a series of structured learning sequences that incorporated chunking and guided repetition, helping learners refine their pronunciation and rhythm. Teachers play a central role in modelling the shadowing technique, providing corrective feedback, and selecting appropriate materials (Thornbury, 2005; Duong, 2025).

Bonilla & G. (2020) explained that while many studies used academic English texts for shadowing, others achieved better engagement and outcomes by using authentic and entertaining materials. Hamada (2011a), for instance, used political speeches by Barack Obama, while Nakayama & T. (2016) explored the impact of shadowing songs such as "As Long as You Love Me." These materials made the activity more interactive and enjoyable for learners. Smartphones, audio playback tools, and shadowing applications provide learners with accessible and flexible ways to practice speaking. Duong (2025) found that mobile devices allowed learners to engage with shadowing tasks outside the classroom, improving motivation and consistency.

Feedback mechanisms also enhance the shadowing experience. Nakayama & A. (2016) observed that learners who recorded and reviewed their speech showed marked improvements in their pronunciation, particularly in reducing their accentedness. Other strategies, such as peer and self-assessment, as well as reflective speaking journals, help students monitor their progress and make adjustments accordingly.

The research reports discussed above reveal that shadowing is a practical and effective strategy for enhancing English-speaking skills. It supports fluency, pronunciation, and vocabulary development while also boosting learner motivation and confidence. The technique is flexible and can be adapted to various learning contexts, especially when supported by appropriate materials and teacher guidance.

3. Research Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research design to investigate the use of the shadowing technique to enhance English-speaking skills at the TTCD in Bangladesh. The participants in the study include five undergraduate students enrolled in the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) program and one English language tutor from TTCD. These participants,

including the tutor, were selected using a purposive sampling method from an English-speaking practice WhatsApp group. All the selected participants had an exposure to or experience with shadowing activities. Semi-structured interviews were conducted individually with the five students and one tutor for data collection. The interviews were recorded with the prior permission of the participants. Data were transcribed, coded, categorised, and then analysed thematically. Five participants who participated in the interview were assigned pseudonyms as P1, P2, P3, P4, and P5, and the tutor was called 'tutor' in the reporting. The findings of the study have been presented in the following section under the research questions.

4.Findings and Discussion

The findings of the study have been presented in this section under the research questions.

4.1 What do the students understand by shadowing in learning to speak English?

The participants have offered varied interpretations of what shadowing means in the context of learning English. While some students understood shadowing as imitation or repetition, others described it with more depth, emphasising real-time interaction with speech, pronunciation, and even physical gestures. P1 stated, "Shadowing means listening to someone speaking English and trying to repeat it exactly in the same way. It helps in improving pronunciation and fluency." This view highlights shadowing as a mimicry-based activity, rooted in repetition for fluency development.

On the other hand, P2 claimed, "By shadowing in any education, I mean copying someone else or practising their efforts or style repeatedly to master it." P2 emphasised practice and repetition of someone's style or effort, indicating a generalised concept of mimicry applied to both content and delivery.

However, P3 offered a broader definition of shadowing. According to P3, "Shadowing is that activity in which a learner practise with an experienced person, learns a task by hand or through their guidance, and our learning becomes realistic." This interpretation views shadowing as a mentoring-based activity, extending beyond language to task-based learning.

P4 explained shadowing from behaviourist point of view. He claimed, "Since our language is a matter of practice, when we practise English shadowing, the practice becomes fruitful. The speaking technique of repeating someone's gestures and style of speaking is called the shadowing

technique." P4's response connects shadowing to the idea of active, embodied learning, imitating gestures, mannerisms, and rhythm to improve speaking.

However, P5 gave a more technical explanation of shadowing. According to P5, "Shadowing is a language learning technique where you listen to a native speaker and immediately repeat what they say, trying to match their pronunciation, intonation, and rhythm. It is often used to improve listening and speaking skills. The key is not just repeating, but mimicking the way the language is spoken in real-time." This quote closely aligns with academic definitions of shadowing, indicating P5's relatively advanced understanding of the shadowing technique.

On the other hand, the tutor provided a comprehensive and pedagogically well-versed definition of shadowing. The tutor maintained:

> *Shadowing is a process or a technique where the learners imitate the native speakers' language. If you want to learn English, you will have to follow, I mean, imitate the native speakers, I mean, you have to follow standard English speakers. Thus, you can achieve good pronunciation, and your accent is better, and you can speak like a native speaker if you practise it for a few days or weeks.*

The tutor further claimed:

> *Particularly for speaking practice or for oral communication, shadowing is very important because in shadowing, learners listen to the native speakers and say it several times and then they try to speak like that native speaker and record their speaking and upload it for my assessment or feedback. I make comments on their speaking style, fluency, pronunciation, and stress and intonation.*

Furthermore, reflecting on students' progress, the tutor added:

> *Yes, after practising shadowing for some days or some weeks, I see fluency, better pronunciation, proper stress, and intonation in everyday communication of the participants. They speak more like a native speaker; their accent becomes more like a native speaker of English.*

The data placed above demonstrate that the participants' understanding regarding shadowing is similar to its actual meaning. The participants' understanding is similar to the definition of shadowing by Marslen-Wilson's (1985) and Ekayati's (2020).

4.2 What kind of resources do the tutors supply to the learners for speaking practice?

The effectiveness of shadowing practice is heavily influenced by the types of resources and support provided by the tutor. The interviews revealed that the tutor played an essential role in curating content, guiding student practices, providing feedback, and shaping their overall engagement with the technique.

The tutor explained in detail his process for selecting and sharing shadowing materials. He asserts:

> *Usually, I search on YouTube, writing 'shadowing.' Then I find some materials where native speakers are speaking or teaching. There are some video clips and audio stories, and dialogues which I use for students' speaking practice. Sometimes, I choose videos where a person describes a real-life story. Everyday life audio-video is easier for students to understand and to imitate.*

The tutor also emphasises the importance of choosing appropriate and accessible content for learners. He claims:

> *If I could choose one standard English speaker, it would have been better. Some videos are too fast or too difficult for students to understand. I have to consider the learners' level. So, I avoided videos with heavy accents or slang, because my students cannot follow that kind of speech easily.*

The tutor further describes how he introduces shadowing in his classroom before assigning tasks for students to complete independently. He maintains:

> *I show them how to listen and repeat. I demonstrate the first part of the video. Then I ask them to record their voice and upload it to the WhatsApp group. I also provide comments on their recordings. Some students have improved a lot after repeated practice, which is evident in their oral communication.*

He also addressed the variation in student participation, which ultimately influences the success of the learners. The tutor asserts:

> *In every class or group, there are always four or five very sincere students in each group. They listen to the audio/video clips, practise them rpeatedly, record them with their smartphones, and upload their audio clips to the WhatsApp groups. Some others are irregular, and some never upload. But those who practise and upload regularly improve their speaking noticeably.*

The student interviews reinforced the importance of the teacher's role in providing both resources and encouragement. P1 alleges, "Our teacher shows us how to shadow. He shares good materials, mostly YouTube and

other social media videos. He checks our recordings and gives feedback. That helps a lot." However, P2 emphasises the need for structured support, "We need some checklists. Teachers should give us points to follow, like what to focus on - pronunciation, tone, stress, or all. That would help us a lot." P3 and P4 note the value of teacher feedback. According to them, without feedback, they do not know if they are progressing or not, or where they need improvement. The teacher should tell them which part was wrong or how to improve it. P5 emphasises the need for continuous practice. P5 maintains, "Teachers should help us build a habit through continuous mentoring. If we practise shadowing regularly, it becomes easier for us to master the art of speaking."

On the other hand, the tutor expresses a need for including shadowing in the Bachelor of Education curriculum. He asserts:

> *If I have any opportunity to redesign our curriculum, I would like to include shadowing in it. Because it helps students improve their pronunciation and speaking fluency a lot. I believe it should not just be an optional activity; it should be formally included in the in-service English language training modules.*

The tutor plays a pivotal role in the process of shadowing practice. He carefully chooses and curates materials collected from YouTube and other social media. It is the tutor who introduces shadowing to the learners and keeps the practice process going. Although other English teachers in other countries use resources such as TED Talks, YouTube, podcasts, and BBC news (Saito et al., 2011; Duong, 2025), the tutor at the TTCD heavily depends on YouTube resources. The tutor confirmed that students who practice consistently and take shadowing seriously show tangible progress in English speaking.

4.3 What shadowing strategies do learners at TTCD follow to improve their English-speaking skills?

The participants in the study describe the strategy they follow in shadowing practice. P1 practises shadowing in his own way and pace. P1 asserts:

> *First of all, I play the audio/video uploaded by the tutor. After a line or a chunk, I pause and repeat the sentence or the chunk aloud. I follow this process to improve my pronunciation and intonation. I do the same thing while watching Hollywood movies: listen, pause, say, and then proceed.*

P2 expresses his way of practising shadowing. He maintains:

> *I try to shadow in real-time. I listen and speak at the same time. I first try to listen carefully and the way he pronounced, his expression, which words he emphasised, then from which part of his mouth the sound comes. I also try to follow his tone in shadowing. These help me in speaking closely, even if they are not accurate, and continuous practice like this helps me to speak like a native speaker of English.*

P2 focuses on the prosodic features, mouth movement, and gestures of the speakers. It suggests deep observation and a desire for native-like fluency. However, P3 also possesses similar opinions as P2. P3 asserts:

> *I stop after each short sentence, repeat it several times orally, and then play the next part. I listen to the uploaded audio/video clips, practise orally, and then upload my own recorded speeches. The tutor gives feedback that helps me develop my pronunciation, stress, and intonation.*

This speaking practice strategy shows a step-by-step practice technique supported by tutor-provided materials, feedback, and feedforward. The use of recordings and the tutor feedback highlights a scaffolded approach to oral skill development. P4 provides a similar strategy as P2 and P3. P3 maintains:

> *I listen to a chunk carefully and wait a few seconds before repeating it. I copy the speaker's tone and stress too. It's repeating like a copycat. I practise shadowing by watching or listening to the clips. I do a similar practice when I watch a cricket or a football match; I listen to the English commentary and repeat it.*

P4 uses some additional shadowing resources other than those his tutor provides. Listening to sports commentaries and repeating them ensures the authenticity of the language.

Alongside the YouTube resources provided by the tutor, P5 exploits some other resources for shadowing. He also employs a slightly different strategy in practice. P5 maintains:

> *I follow different types of shadowing processes such as: Choosing a short, clear audio clip (1–2 minutes) usually from podcasts, TED Talks, or YouTube; listen first without repeating to understand the context, and then play the clips sentence-by-sentence and repeat immediately. I repeat multiple times until I can imitate the speaker smoothly; record my version of the audio, and then compare it with the original.*

The strategy P5 followed is a comprehensive, multi-stage shadowing approach combining delayed repetition, comprehension, and self-monitoring. The use of diverse resources and self-evaluation shows high learner autonomy and motivation.

On the other hand, the tutor described his strategy of engaging learners in shadowing practice. The tutor maintains:

> *As a speaking teaching strategy, I select some smaller reels or video clips and upload them in the WhatsApp groups. There are some groups with different language levels of students, like first-year students, second-year students, and third-year students. So, I upload the reels or the video clips or the audio clips in the groups after a certain interval of a day or two. They are asked to listen to it and repeat it as many times as required to speak like the speaker of the audio/video clips. And when it becomes something like that, native speakers in the reel or the clip, then I ask them to record it on their mobile phone. And after recording, they upload it to the WhatsApp group.*

The tutor claims:

> *There is a student named 'X', and 'X' could not speak English, but he was interested in speaking. He did not even take up English in his Bachelor of Education honors program as an elective course because he was very weak in English in writing and speaking. But he took part in shadowing activities, and after practising for some months, I saw that the uploaded recordings by him were like native speakers.* This powerful example demonstrates how consistent practice, combined with teacher feedback, can lead to measurable improvement in pronunciation, fluency, and confidence. It also emphasises the transformative potential of shadowing for struggling learners.

The tutor further adds that from his experience of working with different groups of students, only the motivated learners could learn to speak

like a native speaker. The above data from the student participants and the tutor support that all the participants rely on repetition, modelling, and recording, which are the key components of successful shadowing practice that help students progress toward native-like fluency (Hamada, 2016; Saito et al., 2011; Tran, 2021; Duong, 2025).

5.0 Conclusion

This qualitative study explored answers to three research questions such as what the undergraduate students of Education understood by shadowing, what resources the tutor used to engage learners in English speaking practice, and what strategies learners employed to practise shadowing. Data were collected from five student participants and a tutor who was engaged in administering the shadowing with learners. Data collected through semi-structured interviews from the participants were transcribed, coded, and then categorised based on the themes of the research questions. The major findings included that the learners had clear knowledge of shadowing; the resources used by the tutor were educative by nature and the tutor borrowed them mainly from the YouTube; and the learners followed a strategy like listening and repeating again and again, audio-recording when the practice-doer believed it was similar to the tutor-uploaded audio/video clips and then uploading the learner's audio in the WhatsApp group. After a learner's upload, the course tutor used to provide constructive feedback. The research revealed that the shadowing technique was beneficial for developing the English speaking skills of those learners who were motivated enough throughout the practice sessions. Therefore, it is worth including shadowing in the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) curriculum as well as in the English language teacher training modules for the greater interest of the English-speaking learners.

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Improving Maritime Training: Identifying and Addressing Challenges at DEPTC Barishal

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Abstract

Bangladesh, gifted with a widespread network of rivers and a strategic position along the Bay of Bengal, has long recognized the importance of maritime activities to its economy and culture. For harnessing the potential of its inland waterways and to meet international maritime standards, the country has established several institutions dedicated to Maritime training and education. One such essential institution is the Deck and Engine Personnel Training Center (DEPTC) Barishal, situated in the southern region of Bangladesh. Established in 2012, DEPTC aims to meet the growing demand for skilled inland ship personnels. Prior to its establishment as a training center, the site was oprated as a marine workshop under the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA). Spotting the growing need for skilled professionals in inland maritime operations, BIWTA transformed the facility into a dedicated training center. This enterprise aimed at addressing the increasing demand for competent crew members in the inland shipping sector, ensuring safety and efficiency in operations. Like many Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions in Bangladesh, DEPTC faces several challenges that hinder the effectiveness of its training programs.
Keywords: Deck and Engine personnel, fire fighting, lifesaving, and emergency response protocols.

1. Introduction

In Bangladesh, water transport is the cheapest means of communication and transportation. Bangladesh has exceptional water transportation structure of connecting most of the area of Bangladesh through water ways in the world. The maritime industry deeply relies on well-trained seafarers to ensure the safety, efficiency, and sustainability of global shipping operations. However, the efficiency of seafarer training institutions plays a pivotal role in shaping competent maritime professionals. In Bangladesh, the Deck and Engine Personnel Training

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Centre (DEPTC) in Barishal represents a critical component of the country's maritime education framework. Despite its significance, DEPTC faces numerous institutional shortcomings that hinder its ability to produce industry-ready graduates. Challenges such as inadequate facilities, limited access to modern simulation tools, being excluded from the examination process & committee and Financial constraints as well as inadequate budget allocation have raised concerns about the quality of education and training provided. These systemic issues not only affect student outcomes but also impact Bangladesh's competitiveness in the global maritime labour market. The primary mission of DEPTC Barishal is to provide specialized training to individuals aspiring to serve as deck and engine personnel on inland vessels. By offering structured programs, the center seeks to: Enhance the operational safety of inland vessels, Ensure compliance with national and international maritime regulations., Develop a pool of skilled professionals adept in modern maritime technologies and practices., Contribute to the sustainable development of Bangladesh's inland water transport sector. This study explores the institutional gaps at DEPTC Barishal, aiming to identify root causes, and it recommends reforms that support its training standards with international maritime needs.

1.1 Research Questions

To accomplish the study, four research questions were set to guide an in-depth analysis of the institutional inadequacies in seafarer training, focusing on the Deck and Engine Personnel Training Centre (DEPTC) in Barishal.

1. What are the infrastructural and technological limitations at DEPTC Barishal, and how do these affect the practical training capabilities for aspiring Inland Crew members?
2. What is the formal procedure through which graduates of DEPTC Barishal obtain certification of eligibility for employment on ships, and what specific role does DEPTC Barishal play in this process?
3. To what degree does DEPTC Barishal collaborate with industry stakeholders, including shipping companies and regulatory bodies, to ensure the employability of its apprentices?
4. How can DEPTC under BIWTA conduct or administer inland crew examination and certification while aligning with the Department of Shipping rules?

1.2 Objective of the Research

The general objective of the study is to critically measure the institutional shortcomings in seafarer training, Examination or Assessment

and Certification at the Deck and Engine Personnel Training Centre (DEPTC) in, Bangladesh. The specific objectives are as follows:

1. To examine the alignment of DEPTC's training programs with international maritime standards, particularly the STCW Convention.

2. To evaluate the DEPTC's facilities, including simulators, laboratories, and training vessels, and their impact on the quality of practical training delivered to trainers.

3. To suggest for establishing a system that guarantees examination or assessment and certification procedure by providing up-to-date, realistic, practical, and experience-oriented training.

4. To recommend for incorporating DEPTC and BIWTA into the examination and certification framework, or transferring full responsibility for these processes to BIWTA for better regulatory coherence and efficiency.

2. Literature Review

A substantial body of literature has been reviewed concerning maritime training and the role of DEPTC Barishal. One key challenge in Bangladesh's maritime education is the misalignment of curricula with international requirement, mainly the Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW) Convention. Institutions like DEPTC Barishal often follow outmoded syllabi, resulting in graduates who may lack critical competencies required by global employers. This gap undermines the international employability of Bangladeshi seafarers (Alamgir, 2017). Research and development (R&D) are essential for advancing maritime education, yet DEPTC Barishal lacks a dedicated R&D unit. This deficiency limits pedagogical innovation and hampers the institution's capacity to update curricula in response to evolving industry demands (Koilo, 2021).

Service barriers also affect DEPTC graduates. Inadequate job placement opportunities, together with a constrained national fleet and inconsistent demand in the maritime industry, hinder graduates from completing mandatory sea service for certification. Additionally, a shortage of qualified faculty, especially in core areas like deck and engine operations, compromises training quality (Ahad, 2010). The lack of dedicated research efforts within institutions such as DEPTC Barishal further constrains curriculum modernization and teaching innovation, reducing responsiveness to maritime industry trends (Hossain, 2021). Rahman et al. (2022) highlighted the need for specialized Maritime Education and Training (MET) to support sustainable economic growth, especially considering

Bangladesh's geographical advantages and recent maritime boundary resolutions. Their review outlines the diversity of MET institutions across Bangladesh and highlights the economic prospects of maritime personnel.

According to Hussain (2011), Bangladesh owns strong maritime potential due to its rich river networks, shipbuilding inheritance, and expansive coastlines. Kabir (2014) adds that Bangladeshi seafarers are internationally respected for their work ethic, English proficiency, and moral character. Reports from ESCAP (2003) and ISF (1990) support the claim that Bangladesh has the potential to significantly expand its share in the global maritime labor market if international standards are upheld. Bangladesh's maritime history dates back millennia, with the Bay of Bengal central to livelihoods and trade. The emergence of the blue economy and maritime education as a driver of National Economic Growth (NEG) has prompted institutional efforts in human resource development. The Seamen's Training Centre (STC) laid early foundations, but the need for a comprehensive maritime institution led to the establishment of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Maritime University (BSMRMU) in 2013. Alamgir (2019) explored the role of maritime education, particularly through BSMRMU, in supporting NEG, highlighting challenges, prospects, and strategic recommendations.

3. Research Methodology

This study employed a mixed-method approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative techniques to explore the institutional shortcomings and opportunities, and potentials of the Deck and Engine Personnel Training Centre (DEPTC), Barishal, predominantly in relation to seafarer training and the complexities of the examination and certification process governed by the Department of Shipping, Bangladesh. The research instruments included a questionnaire survey, semi-structured interviews, and focus group discussions (FGDs). A total of 50 participants were purposively selected, consisting of instructors, administrative staff, current trainees, and alumni of DEPTC. A number of 30 (Thirty) semi-structured interviews and five FGDs were conducted to capture rich, in-depth perspectives on curriculum relevance, instructor qualifications, practical training experiences, and alignment with international maritime standards such as those outlined by the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

4. Findings and Discussion

After in depth study on subject matter, the answers of the research questions were found. From the answer of the questionnaire, FGD and interview, few common problem areas of preservation of training of DEPTC is discovered. The responder also mentioned some probable way to solve the existing problem. This research could answer all the research questions. Finally, the study could propose a probable solution of the problem. The study may be used as a guideline for the government and non-government organizations for future investment and development in this sector of Bangladesh.

4.1 Findings from the Questionnaire Survey

A Questionnaire survey was conducted among 50 personnel related to sea farer training. The findings of the questionnaire are presented below:

- **Funding Constraints and Infrastructure Limitations:** It is found that 90% of the respondents identified insufficient funding as a major barrier, leading to outdated equipment and poor infrastructure that hinders the quality of training.
- **Shortage of Qualified Trainers and Human Resources**: It is found that 87% of respondents emphasized the lack of qualified trainers, which limits the effectiveness of competency-based training programs.
- **Limited Industry Collaboration and Practical Training Opportunities**: The study showed that 72% highlighted the gap in industry collaboration, affecting the practical training exposure of students and their employability.
- **Challenges in Implementing Modern Training Methodologies**: It is found that 81% noted challenges in adopting modern training methodologies like Competency-Based Training (CBT), due to inadequate administrative support and lack of trained teachers.
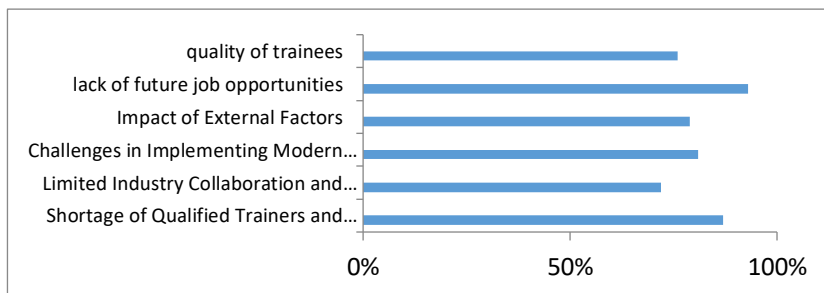

Fisure 1:Challenges of modern training methodologies

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- **Impact of External Factors:** 79% of respondents mentioned the negative impact of external factors like the COVID-19 pandemic, which disrupted training schedules and shifted learning from hands-on to remote methods.
- **Lack of Future Job Opportunities:** In this study, 93% of participants highlighted that the lack of industry linkages and job prospects for graduates diminishes the relevance of training programs.
- **Quality of Trainees:** in the questionnaire survey 76% of respondents pointed out the low quality of trainees due to weak academic backgrounds and lack of motivation.

4.2 Findings from the Inyerviews and FGD

The findings of Interviews and FGDs provided qualitative insights into the perceptions of stakeholders (instructors, trainees, alumni) about the adequacy of the training curriculum, instructor competence, and infrastructure. The study explored the challenges which included:

- Outdated training methods and materials that are not aligned with international maritime standards.
- The misalignment between the certification requirements of the Department of Shipping and the training provided by DEPTC.
- Gaps in practical training opportunities, due to limited resources and industry involvement.

The DEPTC (Deck and Engine Personnel Training Center) in Barishal plays a crucial role in preparing skilled professionals for the Inland maritime industry. It provides specialized training for inland seafarers, focusing on both deck and engine room operations. The center follows a recognized standard set by the Department of Shipping, Bangladesh, ensuring that cadets are equipped with the technical knowledge, safety awareness, and practical skills necessary for global maritime service. DEPTC Barishal primarily offers courses for the Marine apprentices bothe for deck and engine room sides, along with this, it offers courses such as Basic Safety Training (BST), which includes Personal Survival Techniques (PST), Personal Safety & Social Responsibility (PSSR), Elementary First Aid (EFA), Fire Prevention & Fire Fighting (FPFF), Oil & Chemical Tanker Safety Course, Special training for River Pilots and other STCW-compliant modules. The facility includes simulators, workshops, and experienced instructors to facilitate hands-on learning. The training emphasizes discipline, teamwork, and real-world application, preparing trainees for the

demanding life at sea. Graduates from DEPTC are well-regarded in the inland shipping industry and often find employment both locally and internationally. Overall, DEPTC Barishal significantly contributes to the development of competent and safety-conscious Inland maritime personnel in Bangladesh.

Insufficient funding is a significant barrier to the advancement of technical education in Bangladesh. A study revealed that only 4.5% of the total education budget was allocated to TVET in the fiscal year 2023-24, with just 44.5% of this allocated budget utilized in the previous fiscal year. This underfunding leads to inadequate infrastructure, including outdated machinery and equipment, which hampers the quality of training provided. (The Financial Express). 90 % of the expert gave the same opinion on the said limitation. They expressed it as one of the major causes of weak training system of DEPTC Barishal. The effectiveness of training programs heavily relies on the expertise of trainers. However, there is a notable shortage of qualified trainers in TVET institutions, including DEPTC. This scarcity affects the delivery of competency-based training programs and the development of curricula that align with industry needs.(IJERT). A strong linkage between training centres and industries is crucial for providing practical training opportunities. However, many TVET institutions in Bangladesh suffer from inadequate industry collaboration, limiting trainees' exposure to real-world applications of their skills. This gap affects the employability of graduates and the relevance of training programs to market needs. 72% gave opinion on shortage of qualified trainers and human resource.
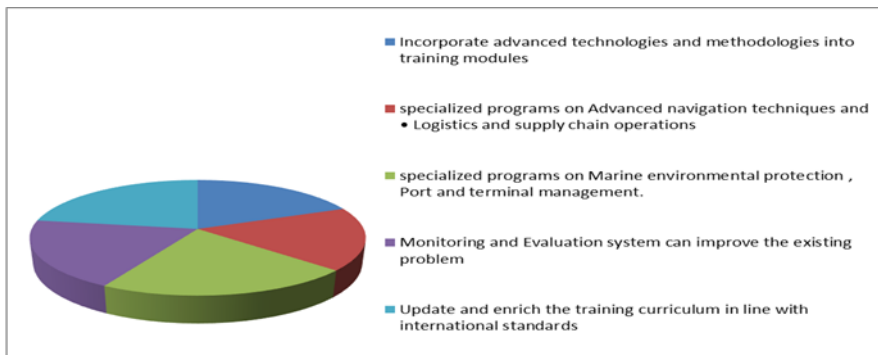

Figure 2: Improvement and relevance of training

The adoption of modern training methodologies, such as Competency-Based Training (CBT), faces several barriers. These include poor administrative support, lack of trained teachers, and challenges in designing competency-based curricula. Such obstacles hinder the effective implementation of training programs that meet industry standards. (IJERT). 81 % gave opinion on challenges in implementing modern training method.

Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that includes increased investment in infrastructure, development of qualified trainers, strengthened industry partnerships, and the adoption of modern training methodologies. Such measures are essential to enhance the quality and relevance of training at DEPTC Barishal and other TVET institutions across Bangladesh.

5. Recommendations

Identifying the dynamic nature of global maritime practices, DEPTC Barishal actively seeks collaborations with international maritime institutions. Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

- Update and enrich the training curriculum in line with international standards.
- Provide exposure opportunities for trainees through exchange programs and joint exercises.
- Incorporate advanced technologies and methodologies into training modules.
- Looking ahead, the center envisions expanding its course offerings to include specialized programs such as:

  - Advanced navigation techniques.
  - Marine environmental protection.
  - Port and terminal management.
  - Logistics and supply chain operations.

- Monitoring and Evaluation system can improve the existing problem. In this regard, following actions can be done:

  - Regular progress reviews (monthly/quarterly)
  - Feedback loops from stakeholders
  - Annual impact assessment

To address this issue of the Examination & Certification process for the inland vessel crews, a viable solution would be to form a dedicated examination committee specifically for inland vessel personnel, incorporating experienced trainers or officials from DEPTC Barishal. Alternatively, the entire responsibility for the examination and certification of inland vessel crews could be delegated to the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA), thereby ensuring relevance, fairness, and efficiency in the certification process.

6. Conclusion

The present study of the Deck and Engine Personnel Training Center (DEPTC) Barishal reveals significant institutional shortcomings that limit its ability to produce globally competitive maritime professionals. These issues, along with deficiencies in the examination and certification mechanisms managed by the Department of Shipping, hinder the effectiveness of DEPTC's training programs. Despite its pivotal role in supporting Bangladesh's inland water transport sector, DEPTC faces systemic challenges, including outdated curricula, inadequate infrastructure, a shortage of qualified trainers, and limited industry collaboration. Together, these factors undermine the practical preparedness and employability of graduates. Survey results show widespread dissatisfaction regarding training quality, job opportunities, and the relevance of educational content to the current maritime labour market globally.

The findings of the study emphasize the need for strategic reforms at DEPTC Barishal. Vital reforms include increased government funding, alignment of training programs with international standards like the STCW Convention, recruitment and development of skilled trainers, and the establishment of stronger industry linkages. Additionally, curriculum modernization, adoption of competency-based training, and the expansion of specialized programs in emerging fields such as environmental protection and logistics are critical to enhancing the center's offerings. To ensure that training remains relevant and effective, improved monitoring, evaluation, and feedback mechanisms should be implemented. Partnerships with international maritime institutions can offer valuable insights and expose trainees to global best practices. With coordinated efforts from policymakers, industry stakeholders, and educational leaders, DEPTC Barishal has the potential to evolve into a center of excellence in maritime education. Such a makeover is not only vital for the center's success but also for Bangladesh's broader ambition to secure a competitive labor market worlwide.

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Reclaiming Voices: Language Weaponization and Cultural Decolonization in *Weep Not, Child*

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Ashrafun Nahar Memory[‡]

Abstract

This article investigates how a language works as a weapon and a system of cultural decolonization. A language is a vessel of culture, a marker of identity, and a site of power struggle. In postcolonial societies, language has often been weaponized as a tool of domination, reinforcing colonial ideologies, suppressing indigenous epistemologies and alienating native populations from their own cultural heritage. The imposition of colonial languages, primarily English and French did not merely serve practical administrative purposes but was central to the project of cultural erasure and psychological subjugation. In response to this linguistic imperialism, many postcolonial writers have sought to reclaim indigenous languages and redefine their cultural narratives. Among them, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o stands as a formidable voice advocating for the decolonization of language and literature. His novel Weep Not, Child provides a critical lens to examine the role of language in both perpetuating oppression and fostering resistance in colonial and postcolonial Kenya.
Keywords: *Voice, language, weaponization, culture, decolonization*

1. Introduction

Language is more than a system of communication; it is a vessel of culture, a marker of identity, and a site of power struggle. Ngũgĩ's literary works explore how language is manipulated to uphold colonial power structures, particularly through the education system, literature, and state propaganda. In *Weep Not, Child*, the protagonist's engagement with colonial education reveals the insidious ways in which language is used to distort history, glorify imperial narratives, and alienate indigenous people from

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their own past. Similarly, *Petals of Blood* presents a post-independence Kenya where the promises of liberation are undercut by neocolonial structures that continue to enforce linguistic and economic oppression. Through these narratives, Ngũgĩ critiques the colonial legacy that lingers in the minds of the colonized, perpetuating a cycle of subjugation under new, yet equally exploitative, systems of governance. (Adejumo, 205).

Ngũgĩ does not merely expose the weaponization of language; he also envisions a pathway toward cultural reclamation and resistance. Central to his decolonial vision is the revitalization of indigenous languages and oral storytelling traditions, which he presents as authentic modes of knowledge production and collective memory preservation. This paper explores how Ngũgĩ employs linguistic and literary strategies to challenge Eurocentric epistemologies and advocate for a return to indigenous ways of knowing. (Bierman,68). To situate these discussions within a broader theoretical framework, this research draws upon key postcolonial theorists, including Frantz Fanon's analysis of linguistic alienation in *Black Skin, White Masks*, Edward Said's critique of imperialist discourse in *Orientalism*, and Ngũgĩ's own theoretical propositions in *Decolonising the Mind*. This paper will interrogate the socio-political implications of linguistic imperialism in Kenya and the broader African context, highlighting how Ngũgĩ's literary interventions contribute to global conversations on decolonization.

This study aims to contribute to the ongoing discourse on cultural decolonization by illustrating how Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's novels function as both a critique of linguistic imperialism and a manifesto for reclaiming indigenous voices. In analyzing *Petals of Blood* and *Weep Not, Child*, this research seeks to demonstrate how literature can serve as a revolutionary tool that not only exposes historical injustices but also reimagines a future rooted in cultural self-determination and linguistic autonomy (Bhabha, 144). Through this exploration, the paper will argue that Ngũgĩ's literary works remain crucial to understanding contemporary struggles for identity, sovereignty, and decolonial justice in the postcolonial world.

2. Language Weaponization in *Weep Not, Child:*

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's *Weep Not, Child* is a seminal postcolonial novel that explores the socio-political struggles of colonial Kenya. One of the most significant aspects of the novel is its examination of language as a tool of control, oppression, and ideological manipulation. Through the experiences of Njoroge, the novel's protagonist, Ngũgĩ highlights how language operates within colonial structures to reinforce power hierarchies, distort historical narratives, and alienate the colonized from their heritage. The study area examines the various ways in which language is weaponized in *Weep Not, Child*, focusing on colonial education, historical erasure, psychological domination, and the subjugation of indigenous voices

(Brinkman, 354). One of the primary ways in which language is weaponized in *Weep Not, Child* is through colonial education. Schools in British Kenya were designed not to empower African students but to condition them into subservience, ensuring their acceptance of colonial rule and Western epistemologies. The imposition of English as the primary language of instruction functioned as a means of control, fostering an inferiority complex among the colonized and alienating them from their indigenous languages and knowledge systems.

Njoroge, the protagonist, views education as a path to personal and national liberation. His schooling primarily serves to inculcate colonial ideologies. The curriculum glorifies British history while downplaying or distorting African history, reinforcing the notion that progress and civilization are inseparable from European influence. The students are taught to see the British as benevolent rulers, a narrative that suppresses the brutal realities of colonial violence. Ngũgĩ illustrates how such an education conditions young Africans to internalize colonial values, thereby weaponizing language to perpetuate mental subjugation (p.355). Furthermore, the inability to speak English fluently is equated with ignorance and backwardness, fostering a sense of inadequacy among native speakers of Gikuyu and other indigenous languages. English becomes the marker of intelligence and modernity, while indigenous languages are systematically devalued. The linguistic hierarchy imposed by the British serves as a mechanism for social stratification, privileging those who master the colonial language while marginalizing those who retain their native tongues. Another critical dimension of language weaponization in *Weep Not, Child* is the deliberate erasure and distortion of historical narratives. By controlling language and the means of knowledge dissemination, the British colonial government rewrites history to legitimize their presence and justify their exploitation of Kenya (p.350). The Mau Mau uprising, a key anti-colonial resistance movement, is depicted in colonial discourse as a savage and lawless rebellion rather than a legitimate struggle for freedom.

Ngũgĩ challenges these colonial narratives by presenting the perspectives of those who suffer under British rule. Through characters like Njoroge's father, Ngotho, the reader gains insight into the realities of land dispossession, forced labor, and systemic racial oppression, issues that are systematically omitted from colonial educational discourse. Language, therefore, becomes a battleground where competing historical truths struggle for recognition. The colonial regime weaponizes language to obscure the violence of imperial rule, while Ngũgĩ reclaims language as a tool of resistance by giving voice to the silenced histories of the colonized. Language in *Weep Not, Child* also serves as a psychological weapon, shaping identity and self-perception. One of the most insidious effects of linguistic imperialism is the internalization of colonial ideologies, leading to

self-doubt and cultural alienation among the colonized. Ngũgĩ illustrates this through the contrasting attitudes of his characters toward language and education (Cassirer, 519).

For Njoroge, mastery of English represents hope and progress. He believes that education will elevate him and his people, unaware that the very system he idealizes is designed to sustain colonial dominance. Conversely, his father, Ngotho, embodies the older generation's disillusionment, recognizing that colonial education serves the interests of the oppressor rather than the oppressed. The generational divide highlights the broader struggle between linguistic assimilation and cultural preservation. The psychological effects of linguistic alienation are further exemplified in the portrayal of indigenous languages. While Gikuyu remains the language of intimacy, community, and oral tradition, it is relegated to the private sphere and deemed unsuitable for formal discourse. This forced bilingualism fractures identity, forcing individuals to navigate between two linguistic worlds one associated with power and opportunity (English) and the other with heritage and belonging (Gikuyu). By positioning English as a superior language, the colonial system erodes indigenous self-worth, creating a cultural dissonance that Ngũgĩ later critiques in *Decolonising the Mind* (Holt, 1).

The colonial authorities suppress African modes of expression, viewing indigenous languages and oral traditions as threats to their rule. Political dissent, often articulated in native languages, is met with brutal repression. The banning of pro-independence literature and the persecution of those who advocate for linguistic and cultural reclamation illustrate the extent to which the British recognize the power of language in shaping resistance (Iheka, 180). Njoroge's growing awareness of the realities of colonial rule coincides with his realization that language is not merely a neutral medium but a deeply political entity. The British criminalize not only armed rebellion but also linguistic defiance. Those who resist in their mother tongues are labeled agitators, radicals, or terrorists, demonstrating how language is instrumentalized to delegitimize anti-colonial struggles.

In *Weep Not, Child*, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o masterfully illustrates how language is weaponized as a tool of colonial domination, serving to distort history, suppress indigenous identities, and enforce psychological subjugation. Through the experiences of Njoroge and his family, the novel reveals the insidious ways in which colonial education, linguistic hierarchies, and historical erasure perpetuate oppression. However, by exposing these mechanisms of control, Ngũgĩ also lays the groundwork for linguistic and cultural resistance. *Weep Not, Child* serves as both a narrative of loss and a call to reclaim linguistic and cultural identity. By highlighting the weaponization of language, Ngũgĩ challenges readers to recognize the enduring impact of colonialism on language and to envision a future where

indigenous voices are not only heard but celebrated. His work remains a powerful testament to the role of literature in the struggle for cultural decolonization and linguistic justice (Joseph,360).

The impact of colonial language policies in *Weep Not, Child* extends beyond the novel's historical setting and remains relevant in contemporary discussions on linguistic imperialism. Many postcolonial nations, particularly in Africa, continue to use colonial languages such as English and French as the primary mediums of instruction, governance, and commerce. Ngũgĩ critiques this ongoing dependency, arguing that it perpetuates "the continued subjugation of African consciousness" (p.359). For example, in Kenya today, English remains the dominant language in education and professional settings, often at the expense of indigenous languages like Gikuyu and Swahili. The novel's depiction of linguistic hierarchy, where English signifies modernity and intelligence while indigenous languages are relegated to the private sphere, mirrors contemporary struggles in postcolonial societies. Education plays a particularly insidious role in perpetuating colonial ideologies. Schools, which were originally established as instruments of colonial control, continue to reinforce Eurocentric narratives and values, alienating Kenyan students from their own histories and traditions. This aligns with Ngũgĩ's critique in *Decolonising the Mind*, where he argues that colonial education distorts the consciousness of the colonized, making them view their indigenous cultures as inferior (Mbogo,359).

3. Ngugi's Critique of Colonial Language Policies

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o is one of the most outspoken critics of colonial language policies, arguing that language was not only a means of communication but also a tool of domination and resistance. In *Weep Not, Child* and *Petals of Blood*, Ngũgĩ exposes how colonial education and governance weaponized language to entrench Western hegemony, alienating Africans from their own cultures. Ngũgĩ also presents language as a site of struggle, highlighting ways in which characters resist linguistic imperialism and attempt to reclaim indigenous voices. In *Weep Not, Child*, the protagonist, Njoroge, views education as the key to success and freedom, believing that acquiring Western knowledge will elevate him and his community. However, his schooling is heavily Eurocentric, focusing on British history, literature, and values while erasing or distorting African history. For instance, British colonial figures are glorified, while African resistance movements are either ignored or presented as primitive uprisings. As Njoroge's teacher explains, "we were taught about the greatness of Europe, and about our own land we knew nothing" (Thiong'o, 45).

Similarly, in *Petals of Blood*, Munira, who becomes a schoolteacher, embodies the contradictions of colonial education. Although he seeks to

enlighten his students, he has himself been shaped by a system that prioritizes Western knowledge over indigenous wisdom. His religious and moral rigidity stems from a colonial Christian upbringing, which distances him from revolutionary consciousness. This aligns with Ngũgĩ's broader critique that colonial education did not liberate Africans but instead trained them to serve the interests of the colonial and later neocolonial elite (Thiong'o, 9). Moreover, colonial-education imposed English as the language of instruction while punishing students for speaking their native languages. This linguistic suppression is evident in *Weep Not, Child*, where Njoroge's school prioritizes English over Gĩkũyũ, reinforcing the idea that indigenous languages are inferior. The same is seen in *Petals of Blood*, where English remains the language of power, spoken by government officials, business elites, and those in privileged positions, while the masses primarily speak their indigenous languages. (Obiechina,530).

In both *Weep Not, Child* and *Petals of Blood*, English is not only the language of education but also the language of governance, law, and economic control. Those who cannot speak it fluently are marginalized from participating in the political and economic life of the nation. In *Petals of Blood*, this exclusion is most evident in the way the post-independence ruling elite, who were educated in colonial schools, continue to use English to govern, making it difficult for the ordinary people to access legal and political processes. The villagers of Ilmorog, for example, struggle to navigate the bureaucratic system, which operates in English and is controlled by those who benefited from colonial education (Thiong'o, 212). This reflects how, even after independence, language remains a barrier that keeps power in the hands of the elite. As Ngũgĩ argues, "the bullet was the means of the physical subjugation. Language was the means of spiritual subjugation" (Thiong'o, 9). Similarly, in *Weep Not, Child*, the colonial legal system operates entirely in English, making it inaccessible to many Africans. Ngotho, Njoroge's father, struggles to understand the political changes happening around him because the language of official discussions excludes him. The use of English as the language of contracts, land ownership documents, and government policies ensured that ordinary Africans remained disempowered, even after political independence (Thiong'o, 98). Ngũgĩ also critiques how colonial authorities used language to distort history and control narratives. In *Weep Not, Child*, the British justify their land expropriation by framing themselves as benevolent civilizers, using legal and historical documents written in English to erase the reality of African dispossession. This aligns with Edward Said's argument in *Orientalism* that colonial powers used language to construct histories that justified their domination (Thiong'o, 105).

While Ngũgĩ critiques the oppressive function of colonial language policies, he also presents language as a site of resistance. In both *Petals of*

Blood and *Weep Not, Child*, characters attempt to reclaim their linguistic and cultural identities as a form of defiance against colonial and neocolonial oppression. One of the most significant forms of resistance is the preservation and use of indigenous languages and oral traditions. In *Petals of Blood*, oral storytelling plays a crucial role in maintaining historical memory and countering colonial distortions. The elders of Ilmorog recount stories of past struggles, ensuring that the younger generations remain connected to their heritage. This reflects Ngũgĩ's belief that oral traditions are essential in resisting cultural imperialism, as indigenous languages carry the historical consciousness of a people. In *Weep Not, Child*, the Mau Mau movement uses secret communication, including coded messages in indigenous languages, to organize their resistance against British rule. This highlights how language, when reclaimed, can serve as a tool of liberation. As Ngũgĩ later argued, "writing in an African language is part and parcel of the anti-imperialist struggles of African peoples" (Thiong'o, 28).

Ngũgĩ himself embodies this resistance by shifting from writing in English to writing in Gĩkũyũ, a decision he made after realizing that continuing to write in English perpetuated the colonial legacy. His critique of colonial language policies in *Decolonising the Mind* is an extension of the ideas explored in *Petals of Blood* and *Weep Not, Child*, reinforcing the argument that true decolonization cannot occur without reclaiming indigenous languages. In *Weep Not, Child* and *Petals of Blood*, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o critiques colonial language policies by exposing how language was used to enforce cultural alienation, economic exclusion, and historical distortion. Through his novels, Ngũgĩ argues that decolonization must extend beyond politics and economics to include language and cultural identity, as true freedom cannot exist without the restoration of indigenous voices (Mbogo, 360).

4. The Impact of Colonialism on Language and Culture

Colonialism was not only a system of economic and political exploitation but also a cultural and linguistic project aimed at erasing indigenous identities and imposing European norms. One of the most profound ways in which colonialism affected African societies was through language, which functioned both as a means of communication and as a carrier of culture. In *Weep Not, Child* and *Petals of Blood*, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o critically examines how colonial powers weaponized language to alienate Africans from their histories, identities, and traditions. He also explores the lingering effects of colonialism on culture, showing how neocolonial structures continue to perpetuate the dominance of Western languages and values at the expense of indigenous heritage.

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o argues that colonialism severed Africans from their linguistic and cultural roots, replacing indigenous languages and

traditions with European ones. This process, which he refers to as "colonial alienation" (Thiong'o, 17), led to a situation in which African people were forced to express themselves in foreign languages while their indigenous tongues were systematically devalued. This alienation is evident in the way colonial education prioritizes English over Gĩkũyũ. Njoroge, the protagonist, initially embraces education as a means of empowerment, but the knowledge he gains is disconnected from his cultural reality. The curriculum is designed to glorify British history while erasing or distorting African perspectives. As Ngũgĩ notes, "we were made to feel that the English language was the language of intelligence and that our mother tongues were only useful for casual conversations" (11). This reflects the broader colonial strategy of making indigenous languages seem inadequate for intellectual and political discourse.

In *Petals of Blood*, the elite class, represented by characters like Chui and Kimeria, is fluent in English and aligned with Western ideals, while the working class and rural communities primarily speak indigenous languages. This linguistic divide reinforces social hierarchies, as those who cannot speak English are excluded from positions of power. The continued dominance of English in post-independence Kenya reflects how colonial language policies remained intact even after formal decolonization. The villagers of Ilmorog, for instance, struggle to interact with government officials and legal institutions because these structures operate in English, a language that remains foreign to them (Thiong'o, 218). The result of this linguistic alienation is a fractured identity: characters who speak English often internalize colonial values, distancing themselves from their cultural heritage, while those who cling to indigenous languages are marginalized within the neocolonial system. This echoes Frantz Fanon's argument in *Black Skin, White Masks* that colonial subjects who adopt the colonizer's language also adopt their worldview, leading to self-alienation. Colonial education was one of the primary mechanisms through which European languages and cultures were imposed on African societies. Ngũgĩ critiques this system in both *Weep Not, Child* and *Petals of Blood*, illustrating how it functioned as an ideological tool that conditioned Africans to accept Western superiority. In *Weep Not, Child*, the school curriculum emphasizes European history and literature while neglecting African history. The students learn about British heroes like Winston Churchill and Queen Victoria, but their own historical figures, such as Dedan Kimathi and other Mau Mau leaders, are either ignored or vilified (Thiong'o, 46).

Munira, the schoolteacher in *Petals of Blood*, embodies the contradictions of colonial education. Having been educated in a missionary school, he is deeply influenced by Christian morality and Western ideals. However, he struggles to reconcile these teachings with the realities of post-independence Kenya. His disillusionment reflects Ngũgĩ's broader critique

that colonial education did not prepare Africans for self-governance but rather trained them to serve colonial and neocolonial interests (Thiong'o, 9). Furthermore, in *Petals of Blood*, the disconnection between colonial education and the realities of African life is evident when the government fails to provide relevant knowledge that could help rural communities. Instead of equipping people with agricultural or industrial skills that could improve their livelihoods, the education system continues to emphasize Western academic subjects that have little practical application (Thiong'o, 276). This ensures that the African elite, educated in colonial-style schools, remain dependent on Western systems and continue to perpetuate colonial economic structures. Through these portrayals, Ngũgĩ argues that true decolonization cannot be achieved without overhauling the education system to reflect indigenous knowledge, history, and languages. While *Weep Not, Child* and *Petals of Blood* depict the damaging effects of colonialism on language and culture, they also highlight acts of resistance and efforts to reclaim indigenous identity. One of the most powerful forms of resistance is the preservation of oral traditions. In *Petals of Blood*, storytelling serves as a means of preserving history and resisting colonial narratives. The elders of Ilmorog pass down knowledge through oral histories, ensuring that younger generations do not forget their past.

In *Weep Not, Child*, the Mau Mau rebellion represents a broader cultural awakening, as fighters use indigenous languages and secret communication to organize resistance against British rule (127). The Mau Mau movement's rejection of colonial authority is also a rejection of imposed linguistic and cultural norms. Ngũgĩ himself advocates for linguistic decolonization as a means of reclaiming African identity. After *Petals of Blood*, he made the radical decision to stop writing in English and instead write in Gĩkũyũ, arguing that "writing in an African language is part and parcel of the anti-imperialist struggles of African peoples" (28). His linguistic shift mirrors the themes of resistance in his novels, reinforcing the idea that language is a battleground in the struggle for true independence.

Through the experiences of characters like Njoroge and Munira, Ngũgĩ reveals the dangers of linguistic and cultural displacement, emphasizing that colonial education was designed to reinforce Eurocentrism rather than empower Africans. However, he also highlights acts of resistance, particularly through oral traditions and the Mau Mau rebellion, as pathways toward reclaiming African identity. Ngũgĩ ultimately argues that the struggle for independence must extend beyond political and economic liberation to include cultural and linguistic reclamation (Quayson, 133).

5. The Reclamation of Identity through Language and Culture

The reclamation of identity through language and culture is a central theme in Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's *Petals of Blood* and *Weep Not, Child*. Both

novels explore the complex relationship between language, culture, and identity, particularly in the context of post-colonial Kenya. This inquiry examines how the authors depict the struggle for identity as a response to colonialism and the ongoing challenges of neocolonialism. Through a critical analysis of character development, narrative structure, and thematic elements, it is argued that both novels highlight the significance of language and cultural heritage in the quest for self-identification and resistance against oppressive systems. In *Weep Not, Child*, language serves as both a means of communication and a tool of oppression. The protagonist, Njoroge, grapples with the tension between his native Kikuyu language and the English language imposed by colonial education. This tension is illustrated in the moment when Njoroge is forced to use English in school, leading to a sense of alienation from his cultural roots. Njoroge's struggle with the English language highlights the disconnection from his identity that results from colonial education. However, as the narrative progresses, Njoroge begins to embrace his native Kikuyu language, which becomes a symbol of empowerment and cultural pride.

In contrast, *Petals of Blood* explores the linguistic divide more critically. Characters like Wamala and Abdulla navigate their identities in a post-colonial landscape, where the legacy of colonialism persists. The novel critiques the continued dominance of English in Kenyan society, especially through the character of Munira, who struggles with his own identity amidst the remnants of colonial rule. He often reflects on the language of power: "The white man's language was the key to success, but it was also the lock that kept them in chains." Through the reclamation of their native languages, the characters assert their identities and challenge the dominance of colonial languages (Iheka,180).

In *Petals of Blood*, the sense of community is equally vital. The characters' interactions reveal the interconnectedness of their lives, illustrating how individual experiences are shaped by collective histories. The novel portrays the community as a source of strength and resilience against adversity. Munira's reflections on his friendships illustrate this point: "In the eyes of his friends, he saw not just their struggles, but a shared history that bound them together, a history worth fighting for." Through their shared narratives, the characters reclaim their identities and assert their agency against oppressive forces. Ngũgĩ emphasizes the importance of community solidarity in the struggle for cultural and linguistic reclamation.

In conclusion, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's *Weep Not, Child* offers profound insights into the reclamation of identity through language and culture in post-colonial Kenya. The author illuminate the struggles faced by their characters as they navigate the complexities of colonial legacies and the challenges of modernity. Through language as a tool of empowerment, the significance of cultural heritage, and the role of community in identity

formation, both novels advocate for a return to indigenous roots as a means of asserting agency and reclaiming identity. As such, they contribute to the broader discourse on post-colonial identity and the ongoing relevance of language and culture in the struggle for self-determination. The study also finds that Ngũgĩ not only critiques the weaponization of language but also advocates for linguistic decolonization as a path to reclaiming cultural identity. In *Weep Not, Child* characters who embrace indigenous languages and oral traditions resist the erasure of their heritage. The novels suggest that true liberation requires more than political independence; it necessitates the revitalization of indigenous languages and cultural narratives (Fanon,1961). This is further reinforced by Ngũgĩ's later transition to writing in Gikuyu, emphasizing that language is central to self-determination and resistance against neocolonial structures. The findings of this paper reaffirm that *Weep Not, Child* and *Petals of Blood* serve as both critiques of linguistic imperialism and calls for cultural reclamation. Language was systematically weaponized under colonial rule to enforce mental subjugation, erase indigenous histories, and maintain power hierarchies. However, Ngũgĩ's work also demonstrates that language can be a tool for resistance and cultural revival. The study underscores the necessity of decolonizing language policies in postcolonial societies to restore indigenous identities and promote true intellectual sovereignty.

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This section should also discuss how the results relate to previous research mentioned in the literature review, any cautions about the findings, limitation of the study, and potential for future research.

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