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**Evaluation of English Language Teaching Methods Used
in Higher Secondary Education in Bangladesh**

Nitish Kumar Mondal, M.A. (Double)

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Abstract

The language teaching methods are very important for the purpose of learning and teaching in every language. English language has different teaching methods like other languages of the world.

The objective of the study was to find out the strengths and weaknesses of the present English language teaching methods and to evaluate their suitability in teaching English at higher secondary level education in Bangladesh. For the purpose of data collection, a questionnaire was prepared where the populations of the study were college teachers.

A total of 100 teachers were selected as the sample for this study. The respondents were from the different colleges in three districts. The sample was selected through a random sampling method. Though a number of teaching methods are used at higher secondary level, the findings showed and side by side suggested that the present method named “Communicative Language Teaching” used on the Higher Secondary

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level education in Bangladesh was not suitable for the current text book of English, where interaction between the teachers and the students are lacked of and two skills like reading and writing are applied only and the teachers were not using this method wholeheartedly. Then the current method needed to be improved with adding grammar and literary piece, which could be applied through technological aspects.

Key words: methods, strengths, weaknesses, suitability, technological.

Introduction

Evaluation of language teaching methods is needed for knowing pros and cons of the methods and updating them in any language. Evaluation of language teaching method means to decide the value or quality of methods. Kiely, et al (2005) remarked about language program evaluation that 'Evaluation' has been a persistent problem and it is the heart that connects and gives blood to all the other program elements and a primary focus on making judgments about language programs based on experimental designs and limited quantitative analyses. They are very much interested launching that language education practitioners have begun to realize the benefits of broader notions of evaluation as a means of informing program development, and a focus on program processes has gained substantial attention in this regard. Thus, they have suggested that evaluation process should be used meaningfully.

Norris (2006) has emphasized on the evaluation program in college foreign language programs. In this manner, evaluation of English language teaching methods, including data collection, analyses, and presentation of evaluation findings, have been made successful. The definition of evaluation of the present study has been set up through Norris's (2004) Validity Evaluation in Foreign Language Assessment. He pointed out that evaluation is needed for every purpose in language teaching methods and provided a framework for applying a utilization-focused evaluation approach to the validation process. The present study, however, has focused on evaluation of English Language Teaching Methods (ELTM) used at the Higher Secondary education in Bangladesh.

Background

In the late sixties, Kelly (1969) produced an overview of language teaching history which began in the period around 500 BC among western countries. His long historical perspective carries a message for anyone looking at the development of language teaching. But English Language in India www.languageinindia.com

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language teaching was originated with the propagation of English nation and in Bangladesh, it was initiated in the colonial period. As English enjoyed very prestigious position during colonial period, due attention was given in teaching this language in undivided India. It continued as a colonial leftover after 1947 till 1971.

With the independence of Bangladesh in 1971, the policy makers of this country diminished the importance of English. As a result teaching of English in Bangladesh experienced different dimension regarding its curriculum, syllabus, materials, methodology, testing and evaluation. It also experienced a mismatch between different components of the program. Different methods have been found to be used. Therefore, it becomes necessary to examine the effectiveness of the present methods in teaching English at the Higher Secondary Education in Bangladesh.

In Bangladesh, over the periods a number of English language teaching methods have been demonstrated and these methods have been changed again and again on the basis of unhygienic evaluations. The policy makers in this country have changed this ELTM correlation with their various domains of using both quantitative and qualitative measures, Parametric and non-parametric measures of ELTM which were used to test hypothesis without knowing the authentic and fundamental needs of the students and the proficiency of the teachers. This study thus finds out its importance to evaluate the existing methods of teaching English at the Higher Secondary education in Bangladesh.

Definition and introduction of methods

Method means system by which problem can be solved in a specific field where teaching methods are the application of theoretical findings and positions and English language teaching methods are related with English language teaching meaningfully. Anthony (1963) says, Method is an overall plan for the orderly presentation of language material, no part of which contradicts, and all of which is based upon, the selected approach.

An approach is axiomatic, a method is procedural. Within one approach, there can be many methods. A method, on the other hand, refers to a specific instructional design or system based on a particular theory of language and of language learning.

There are many methods in English language teaching. Among them Grammar-translation method, Direct method, Audio-lingual method and Communicative Language Teaching Language in India www.languageinindia.com

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(CLT) are very essential for English language teaching. These methods can be sum up in the following ways—

Grammar Translation Method: Grammar Translation Method was first introduced in Germany especially in Prussia. Hence it was also called Prussian Method. This method is the oldest method of foreign language teaching, having existed for more than 2000 years which dominated European and foreign language teaching from the 1840s to the 1940s and is being modified and used in different countries of the world today. But this method was immigrated for teaching language in Bangladesh during colonial period which is being used till today. It is a very traditional method which does not have any theoretical framework. Richards, et al (1986) state “It is a method for which there is no theory. There is no literature that offers a rationale or justification for it that attempts to relate it to issue in linguistics, psychology, or educational theory”. Howatt (1984) depicts in his article that the high priority attached to meticulous students of accuracy which, as well as having an intrinsic moral value, was a prerequisite for passing the increasing number of formal written examinations that grew up during the century. This method is still common in many countries, even popular. Brown (1995) attempts to explain why the method is still employed by pointing out “It requires few specialized skills on the part of teachers. Tests of grammatical rules and of translations are easy to construct and can be objectively scored. Many standardized tests of foreign languages still do not attempt to tap into communicative abilities, so students have little motivation to go beyond grammar analogies, translations and rote exercises”. The principal characteristics of this method are: (i) it is a way of studying a language that approaches the language first through detailed analysis of its grammar rules, followed by application of this knowledge to the task of translating sentences and texts into and out of the target language, (ii) little or no attention is given to pronunciation, (iii) classes are continued through mother tongue with a little use of the target language, (iv) a number of vocabularies are taught in the lists of isolated words, (v) long hair-explanting explanation of grammar is presented and illustrate, (vi) reading of difficult classical text is started early, (vii) very little attention is paid to the context of text rather than focus on the grammatical issues of text, and (viii) reading and writing is emphasized than speaking and listening.

Direct Method: Direct Method, alternatively called “The Natural Method” begun in 1923 focusing on the foreign language that could be taught without translation or the use of the learner’s native language if meaning was conveyed directly through demonstration and Language in India www.languageinindia.com

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action (Richards, et al, 2002). According to teaching quality improvement project (TQIP) in secondary education in Bangladesh, this method became popular. It has been said that this method was developed as a reaction to the grammar translation method. In this method, the learners are interested in a flow of examples of the L2, at the same time getting them engaged in conversations or questions/answers aiming at establishing “a direct bond between experiences and expressions.” It emphasizes direct contact with the target language in meaningful sentences. The idea was to teach the language ‘directly’ and naturally with plenty of oral exercises and active demonstration of the words being used through visual aids, dramatization, etc. Grammar is taught implicitly, not explicitly. The key features of this method are as (i) no use of any language except the target language, (ii) no use of explicit grammar, (iii) use of visual aids, (iv) Use of dramatization (i.e. acting, mime), and (v) use of special gestures, to convey meaning

Audio-lingual Method: Americans needed to become orally proficient in the languages of their allies and enemies alike at the time of World War II, especially when they entered into the field of World War II. Coleman (1929) recommended this approach to foreign language teaching for using in American schools and colleges which emphasized teaching the comprehension of text which persuaded foreign teachers to focus on the reading text more than the teaching of oral skills. This method was based on linguistic and psychological theory and its main premises was the scientific descriptive analysis of a wise assessment of languages. On the other hand, conditioning and habit-formation models of learning put forward by behaviouristic psychologists were firmly related with the pattern practice of the Audio-lingual Method that Brown (1995) would like to say “firmly-grounded in linguistic and psychological theory”. The characteristics of this method can be drawn up in the lists, as (i) vocabulary can be limited and applied in context, (ii) Some issues can be used like tapes, language labs and visual aids, (iii) new materials are used through dialogue form, (iv) there will be made a tendency of memorization of vocabularies and phrases, (v) pronunciation is very important, (vi) structures are sequenced by means of contrastive analysis and taught one at a time, (vii) There is little or no grammatical explanation is seen, (viii) a little use of mother tongue is permitted by the teachers, (ix) Error-free utterances are seen, and (x) Successful responses are come out.

Communicative language teaching (CLT): Communicative Language Teaching is an approach to the teaching of second and foreign languages that emphasize communication, as Language in India www.languageinindia.com

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both the means and the ultimate goal of learning a language. The origins of it are to be found in the changes of the British language teaching tradition dating from the late 1960s. Wilkins (1972) in his book titled “Notional Syllabus” played a significant role for the development of CLT and its greater application between the teachers and learners simultaneously. One of the most characteristic features of CLT is that it pays systematic attention to functional as well as structural aspects of language and describes spoken and written discourse. The goal of CLT is to develop communicative competence. It means what a speaker needs to know in order to be communicatively competent in a speech community which adjacent with a number of functions such as, instrumental, regulatory, inter-actional, personal, and heuristic, imaginative and representational. Though this method was started in England in the early 19th century but it was introduced for teaching English at higher secondary education in Bangladesh in 2001 and is being continued till today. According to Richards, et al (2001), there are four characteristics of the communicative view of language as (i) language is a system for the expression of meaning, (ii) the primary function of language is to allow interaction and communication, (iii) the structure of language reflects its functional and communicative uses, (iv) the primary units of language are not merely its grammatical and structural features, but categories of function and communicative meaning as exemplified in discourse.

The above mentioned methods are used in many countries of the world in different situations but these methods are not well-used in Bangladeshi teaching program like secondary, higher-secondary and advanced level education. Among the above mentioned methods the grammar translation method is being used in Bangladesh before 1971 to till today at all stages of educational program including higher-secondary level education. But at present Communicative language teaching has been included with it.

A Brief Review of Previous Researches

Yasmin, G. (1984) conducted research study on “a comparative study of the effectiveness of the inquiry and traditional methods for teaching biological sciences in laboratory at the High School Level.” A sample of 400 students was further divided into 8 groups (4 experimental and 4 control). The findings of the study reveal that the inquiry approach is more effective as compared to traditional methods.

In his research study titled, “The influence of teaching methods on student achievement on Virginia end of course standards of learning test for Algebra,” Haass (2002) suggested that Algebra teachers should emphasize direct instruction, technology-aided instruction, and problem-based learning. These three teaching methods categories ranked highest in both analyses.

Jason (2006) conducted a research study titled; “effective teaching methods for large classes” has concluded that the lecture/discussion teaching method was the most preferred among students. Student comments as to their reason for selecting this as the most valuable method seem to suggest that they have a desire to be somewhat active learners, engaging in discussion rather than passively listening to a lecture. Overall, the findings of this study suggest that faculty teaching large classes should attempt to include constructive active teaching methods in their courses whenever possible. Results indicate that most students prefer to be active in their learning process. The active and collaborative teaching methods examined in this study are not only desirable to many students, but they also appear to produce significant improvement in terms of learning outcomes.

In his research study named “Effective use of teaching methodologies at secondary level in Pakistan,” Mehmood, et al. (2011) suggested that teachers should use motivational techniques to involve them in learning process irrespective of the teaching methods used. Side by side teachers should select the method of teaching in the light of topic and learners need and level. He also added that Audio- Visual aids should be used more frequently by the teachers to make their teaching effective and the teachers should pay attention to remove signs of puzzlement, boredom, curiosity to make students learned in a better way.

English Language Teaching Improvement Project (2008) is sponsored by the ministry of education in Bangladesh has been working to promote teaching learning of English in the Secondary level education in Bangladesh and introduced the communicative language teaching approach in the English curriculum of the country for the first time. Breen, et al (2001) developed the notion of ‘teaching principles’ for particular techniques that they adopted during language lessons which revealed a set of guiding Language in India www.languageinindia.com

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principles that appeared to be shared across the group'. Their analysis showed that lessons do not have either an exclusive content (i.e. language) or student focus, but rather a dynamic balancing of these two dimensions of the teaching task.

Richards (2006) explored one way in which Breen's decision-making can be understood through an identity-oriented analysis of classroom interaction.

At the same time, Norris (2006) increased the demands of evaluation in the contemporary educational landscape – that language educators in a variety of settings are becoming sufficiently tuned in to the necessity of evaluation as a path towards program improvement, educational effectiveness, and perhaps survival of the language teaching profession.

Kiely, et al. (2005) explain that, 'for a range of reasons, evaluation processes and findings remain either insufficiently documented or unpublished'. Those program evaluations provide information about the conditions under which the programs were implemented or explanations for the programs' effectiveness.

Klapper, et al. (2003) compared the impact of teaching in a university on German foreign language program. The previous studies worked on kindergarten, high school and university level but the present study worked on the higher secondary education in Bangladesh. The study, however, demonstrates how the research dimension of evaluation still shapes views of improving English language teaching Methods of Higher secondary education in Bangladesh.

Statement of the Problem

The present research was designed to evaluate the English language teaching methods at the higher secondary level education in Bangladesh.

Objectives

The objectives of the study were implemented through following specific questions:

- (i) Which methods are used in English language teaching at the higher secondary education in Bangladesh?

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- (ii) What are the merits and demerits of the existing methods?
- (iii) How the existing methods can be improved?

Significance of the Study

This study has great importance for the teachers in general and for secondary school teachers and higher secondary college teachers in particular, as this study has collected a lot of information about teaching methods, their effectiveness and appropriateness about various disciplines at higher secondary level. Furthermore, study will guide the head teachers in exploring proper methodologies for teaching. The significance of the study will also be for the planners and education managers in policy formulation or revision of teacher education programs at higher secondary level education in the country. It will also help in-service teacher education institution to award or offer relevant in-service i.e. training programs.

Methodology

The methodology of this research describes the location of the study followed by sampling procedures employed in the study, a profile of the informants, and method of data collection, instrumentation, data collection procedures and data analysis procedures.

Location and informants of the study

This research examined English language teaching methods of the higher secondary level education in Bangladesh through a number of colleges of south-western part of the country like both colleges (urban and rural) in Khulna, Satkhira and Bagerhat districts. The informants were lecturers, assistant professors, associate professors and professors. The research had both male and female informants.

Sampling and instrumentation procedures

The population of this research was college teachers. A total of 100 teachers were selected as the sample for this research. The respondents were from the different colleges in three districts. The sample was selected through a random sampling method. A total of 100 English teachers were selected as respondents to whom the questionnaire was administered to collect data for this research. This research is descriptive and non-experimental. The research was based on primary data. The data were collected via the survey approach through a self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire survey method was preferred

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because the researcher investigated informant's use of English language teaching Method at higher secondary education.

This method was chosen because (i) this method is suitable for empirical research; (ii) the data collected through this method is easily quantifiable; (iii) this method gives informants enough time to provide well thought out answers; (iv) this offers greater anonymity to the informants; and (v) this requires low cost and saves time. The questionnaire was prepared by researcher in connection the research demands. In preparing the questionnaire, caution was exercised to ensure the standard and quality of the questions.

The researcher was concerned about the validity, reliability, clarity, practicality, and administration of the instruments. A pilot survey was conducted to study the feasibility of the instruments. The feedback from this pilot survey on the appropriateness of the questionnaire was then incorporated into the questionnaire and approved of administration.

Data collection and analysis procedures

Quantitative method was used to collect the data. The data was collected through a survey in the form of a questionnaire. The questionnaires were administered by the researcher himself. The questionnaires were distributed to the English teachers of the colleges and requested them to return the completed questionnaires after answering. Upon completion of the collection of data, the data was edited, coded classified and tabulated for computation and analysis. The analysis was done using SPSS (statistical package for social sciences) software. This software was used to examine and investigate about teachers' choice of answer through which the percentage values were obtained.

Questionnaire and table analysis

- Q1.** Is "Communicative Language Teaching" used in teaching English at the Higher Secondary education in Bangladesh?
- Q2.** Are you familiar with the current method of teaching English at the higher secondary education in Bangladesh?

- Q3.** Did you receive any training using the current method of teaching English at the Higher Secondary education in Bangladesh?
- Q4.** Have any strength of the current method of teaching English at the Higher Secondary education in Bangladesh?
- Q5.** Have any weakness of the current method of teaching English at the Higher Secondary education in Bangladesh?
- Q6.** Do you think that grammar is taught effectively through the current method of teaching English at the Higher Secondary education in Bangladesh?
- Q7.** Do you think that reading skill is taught effectively through the current method of teaching English at the Higher Secondary education in Bangladesh?
- Q8.** Do you think that writing skill is taught effectively through the current method of teaching English at the Higher Secondary education in Bangladesh?
- Q9.** Do you think that speaking skill is taught effectively through the current method of teaching English at the Higher Secondary education in Bangladesh?
- Q10.** Do you think that listening skill is taught effectively through the current method of teaching English at the Higher Secondary education in Bangladesh?
- Q11.** Do you think that the current method of teaching English is suitable for the current text book of English?
- Q12.** Do you think that the interaction between the teachers and the students is increasing through the current method of teaching English at the Higher Secondary education in Bangladesh?
- Q13.** Do you think that students really develop their communicative competence through this method in Bangladesh?
- Q14.** Do you think that current method of teaching English at Higher Secondary education should be continued?
- Q15.** Do you think that current method of teaching English at Higher Secondary education should be changed?

Q16. Do you suggest using “Communicative Language Teaching” for Higher Secondary education in Bangladesh?

QN- Question Number

A- Agreed

SA- Strongly Agreed

DA- Disagreed

SDA- Strongly Disagreed

MP- Major Percentage

QN	A	SA	DA	SDA	MP
01	06	87	03	04	87
02	03	90	05	02	90
03	12	68	05	15	68
04	21	59	13	07	59
05	08	38	12	42	42
06	16	03	17	64	64
07	13	05	25	57	57
08	14	82	04	00	82
09	03	01	09	87	87
10	22	74	03	01	74
11	19	07	18	56	56
12	29	09	43	19	43
13	23	08	63	06	63
14	25	10	58	07	58
15	51	27	16	06	51
16	66	17	13	04	66

Findings

Following findings were drawn on the basis of question analysis of the questionnaire:

1. Majority of 87% respondents agreed with the statement that “Communicative Language Teaching” is used in teaching English at the Higher Secondary education in Bangladesh which has been expressed through their strong agreement with the statement.
2. Majority of 90% respondents agreed with the statement that they are familiar with the current method of the country which has been expressed through their strong agreement with the statement.

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3. Majority of 68% respondents agreed with the statement that they have taken training on the current method of the country which has been expressed through their strong agreement with the statement.
4. Majority of 59% respondents agreed with the statement that the current method of the country has strength which has been expressed through their strong agreement with the statement.
5. Majority of 42% respondents agreed with the statement that the current method of the country has some weaknesses which has been expressed through their strongly disagreement with the statement.
6. Majority of 64% respondents agreed with the statement that grammar is taught effectively through the current method of teaching English which has been expressed through their strongly disagreement with the statement.
7. Majority of 57% respondents agreed with the statement that reading skill is taught effectively through the current method of teaching English at the Higher Secondary education which has been expressed through their strongly disagreement with the statement.
8. Majority of 82% respondents agreed with the statement that writing skill is taught effectively through the current method of teaching English at the Higher Secondary education which has been expressed through their strong agreement with the statement.
9. Majority of 87% respondents agreed with the statement that speaking skill is taught effectively through the current method of teaching English at the Higher Secondary which has been expressed through their strong disagreement with the statement.
10. Majority of 74% respondents agreed with the statement that listening skill is taught effectively through the current method of teaching English at the Higher Secondary education which has been expressed through their strong agreement with the statement.

11. Majority of 56% respondents agreed with the statement that the current method of teaching English is suitable for the current text book of English which has been expressed through their strong disagreement with the statement.

12. Majority of 43% respondents agreed with the statement that the interaction between the teachers and the students is increasing through the current method of teaching English at the Higher Secondary education which has been expressed through their disagreement with the statement.

13. Majority of 63% respondents agreed with the statement that students really develop their communicative competence through the current method of teaching which has been expressed through their disagreement with the statement.

14. Majority of 58% respondents agreed with the statement that the current method of teaching English at Higher Secondary education should be continued which has been expressed through their disagreement with the statement.

15. Majority of 51% respondents agreed with the statement that the current method of teaching English at Higher Secondary education should be changed which has been expressed through their agreement with the statement.

16. Majority of 66% respondents agreed with the statement that they suggest using “Communicative Language Teaching” for Higher Secondary education which has been expressed through their agreement with the statement.

Results and Discussions

The result is drawn up through data analysis and findings of the research. When designing the evaluation methods, the present research could address the focal evaluation questions, so it designed corresponding questions to obtain information about that theme desired. The questions the study implemented were highly structured and the teachers’ answers and responses to the questions helped to continue the research effectively. When analyzing the data, it also obtained a clearer picture of the implementation status of the current research.

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Conclusion

As the view of the common practice at higher secondary level the communicative language teaching method in its various forms is an effective method used by the teachers. Occasionally teachers do use other methods like grammar translation, lecture, direct etc depending upon the situation and the topic at hand. Though Communicative language teaching method with all its characteristics is used on the Higher Secondary education in Bangladesh, it is not suitable for the current text book of English.

Recommendations

Following recommendations were made on the basis of conclusions:

1. There should be needed interaction between the teachers and the students.
2. As two skills like listening and writing were applied only, there should be improved other two skills like- reading and speaking alike.
3. The current method should need to be improved with adding grammar and literary piece.
4. The current method should be applied through technological aspects.

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