Chain Reactions of Private Tutoring in English Language Learning at the SSC Level of Bangladeshi Students: Problems and Probable Solutions

Md Abu Nayeem, M.A. in TESOL

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Abstract

Private Tutoring in English Language Learning is a very common phenomenon among Bangladeshi learners at the SSC level. Many learners are very eager to receive private tutoring supports in ELT. Parents also depend upon private tutoring to cut good figures of the examinations of their children. Monthly paymentin private tutoring is on the increase day by day in Bangladesh. This study aims to examine the major reasons of private tutoring in English Language Learning at the SSC level of Bangladesh Education System. Moreover, it aims to investigate the problems of the learners why they are so weak in English. To carry out this project at Gazipur District in Bangladesh, 10 teachers (both schoolteachers and tutors), 20-25 students of SSC level and 15 parents were taken interview with a questionnaire process. Anobservation was done in the classroomto investigate where there was any weaknessin English teaching capability of the private tutors. The findings from the survey show that most of the SSC level students receive private tutoring support and they have a satisfactory mentality with English Language Learning process provided by the private tutors rather than school teachers. But in real sense, learners should not relyupon private tutor. Private tuition has both positive and negative aspects. Parents and learners should understand the necessity of private tutoring in English Language Learning and at the same timebe conscious of problematic aspects of private tutoring as well.

Key words: ELT, Private Tutoring, Tutors, SSC Level Students, Parents and Teachers

Introduction

Private tutoring in academic subjects is defined as tutoring provided on a supplementary basis at the end of the school day, at weekends, or during vacations. It is paid for by fees and it

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typically involves two individuals, a tutor (the teacher or the person who helps someone to learn) and a tutee (the person being taught). The tutor is more knowledgeable or expert than the tutee, and attempts to help the tutee learn, usually in an academic area. Age is not necessarily a factor in the tutoring relationship – the tutor and tutee may be the same age – as long as the tutor has greater knowledge or skill than the tutee. Traditionally, tutoring has involved one-to-one instruction, but some tutoring programs do involve a tutor and two or three tutees. Tutoring does not include extracurricular subjects such as sports and art lessons or family members on voluntary basis. (Bray, 2003, p.13)

Private tutoring is a widespread phenomenon in many developing and developed countries around the globe. It is a byproduct and a characteristic of certain educational system which makes to establish a milieu for its prevailing system. This is the case in the educational system in Bangladesh, where private tutoring is on the increase across the country despite the government has taken some protesting stepsagainst it. Private tutoring does affect many subjects, like English, Mathematics, Accounting, and Science in the Bengali educational curriculum, though certain subjects take the lion's share of attention of the SSC learners in Bangladesh. One of these subjects is English as a foreign language (EFL). This is due, for the major part, to the importance of this language in future studies or work opportunities in Bangladesh.

In Bangladesh, many SSC level learners have a strong motive towards private tutoring, they think that there is no alternative means without private tutoring. Guidance have also same motive like their children. Both parents and students think that private tutoring can bring for them a brilliant success in each examination.

The current study wants to examine the issues of private tutoring in relation to the subject of English Language Learning, with a consideration of its reasons and impacts on Bangladeshi students' learning motivation. To acquire the target, the study has taken interviews of 20 students as well as their parents to investigate what makes them adhere to private tutoring and what impacts it has on them and their learning.

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The reasons as stated above, I would like to find out the"Impact of Private Tutoring on English Language Learning at the SSC Level of Bangladeshi Learners: Problems and Probable Solutions." For this purpose, I didcarry out the tiny research projectin the English Language Home situated atmy local zone, Tongi under Gazipur district of Bangladesh with a view to investigating a new dimension of the 21st –century ELT at the SSC levelof Bangladesh Education System.

Research Questions

In the light of the discussion stated above, this study, would like to answer the following questions:

1. What are the major reasons of Private Tutoring on English Language Learning at the SSC Level of Bangladesh Education System?
2. To what extend do students have to face problems for private tutoring?
3. Why do teachers and tutors get themselves in private tutoring?

Literature Review

Private Tutoring is defined as fee-based tutoring that provides supplementary instruction to children in academic subjects they study in the mainstream education system. **(Dang & Rogers, 2008, p.161)** Educational institutions are the places where tuition is supposed to take place. The teachers and the students jointly participate in classroom situation to achieve education. The education provision is such that in majority cases the students require study at home in order to supplement school education. It is done in the form of homework and learning what was asked by the schoolteachers. Studying at home requires tutoring support, which sometimes the parents, relatives or the household members provide and sometimes do not, so, an external support is often sought for this and such support is sometimes provided free of cost and often on a payment basis. Therefore, private tutoring means payment-based tutoring support to the students outside official school hour. **(Nath, 2006, p.1)**

Bangladesh is a developing country and private tutoring in Bangladesh is delivered by mainstream teachers, teachers from other institutions or even non-teachers. Lessons occur one-to-one, in small groups (5-10 students) or in large groups (20 students or more). The venue of the teaching can be tutors place of residence (one-to-one or small groups), the tutee's place of

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residence (usually one-to-one) or special teaching centers (large groups) known as coaching centers**. (Hamid; Sussex & Khan, 2009, p. 281)** There are many differences found in the ages and qualifications of private tutors. In many settings, secondary school students earn pocket money by tutoring primary school children, and similarly, university students tutors secondary students. At other end of the age scale, many tutors are retirees who wish still to contribute to society and earn some extra money. Between these two extremes of age are others who provide tutoring on a full time or part time basis, and who may or may not have formal training. This picture contrasts with mainstream schooling, in which teachers are expected to be aged between 21 and 65 and to have formal training. **(Bray, 2006, p.529)**

Bray (1999) also called private supplementary tutoring a "shadow education system". The metaphor of a shadow is appropriate in several ways. First, private supplementary tutoring only exists because the mainstream education exists, second, as the size and shape of the mainstream system change, so do the size and shape of supplementary tutoring, third, in almost all societies much more public attention focuses on the mainstream than on its shadow, and fourth, the features of the shadow system are much less distinct than those of the mainstream system. Tutoring reduces the workload of mainstream teachers and helping the students to understand the materials which have been presented during the school day.**(Bray, 1999, p.17)** Private tutoring is also embedded in South Korean society, where it is known as 'hagwuan' or cram schools**. (Hamid, Sussex & Khan, 2009, p.282)** It is also an integral part of education in Hong Kong. In Hong Kong, a 1998 survey of four schools serving different populations groups found an average on 41% of grades 3 and 39% of grade 6 pupils receiving private tutoring. **(Bray, 1999, p.24)**

Private tutoring is described as a shadow for several reasons. First, it only exists because the mainstream education system exists. Second, it imitates the mainstream: as the mainstream changes in size and orientation, so does the shadow. Third, in almost all societies much more public attention focuses on the mainstream than on its shadow; and fourth, the features of the shadow system are much less distinct than those of the mainstream. Tutoring is a huge industry

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in much of Asia and is growing fast elsewhere, particularly in Africa, Europe and North America. **(Bray, 2005, pp.1-2)**

Moreover, **Foondun (2002)** has used the term *Private Tuition* and definedit as extra coaching in academic and examinable subjects that is given to students outsideschool hours for remuneration. On the other hand, **Wolf (2002)** who was writing about theThird International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) used the term *Extra SchoolInstruction* (ESI) to denote teaching and coaching activities in mathematics and sciencetaking place outside of the regular school structure. It excludes extra help given to students by teachers under the auspices of the school. Following from these descriptions of privatetutoring, private schools can be excluded from the category of PST, although private schoolsconstitute an aspect of private education.

Reasons of Private Tutoring at the SSC Level in Bangladesh

Private tutoring in English is on the increase in urban and rural schools in Bangladesh. It is implemented at all stages of education. Private tutoring in Bangladesh is tutored by mainstream teachers, teachers from other institutions, or students of schools, colleges and universities. The system of private tutoring varies from each other. Students of SSC level are being taught in a small group within 10 to 15 studentsor in large groups within 20-25 students or more. The placement of the teaching can be the tutor's house, tutee's house, or special teaching places like coaching centers. Mostparents provide their children with private tutors, because they think that it would help them learn the language,or to get higher grades in English subjects and English is very necessary for future expectations and career opportunities. So many children leave schools with or without break for private tutoring in English. Many others children also receive tutoring on non-school days at weekends, during vacations and on public holidays (Hamid et al, 2009, p. 284).

Teacher shortages and overcrowded students in schools help to make a large market for private tutoring throughout Bangladesh. The rate of private tutoring at the SSC level is on the increase per year over the past decade. Although private tutoring receives grater among boys, urban students, and wealthier households, but it is observed to receive private tutoring even the

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poor family. A research investigated by BRAC's Research and Evaluation Division shows that private tutoring in Bangladesh helps students learn more than those who have no such support.Private tutors for SSClevel have become a very common phenomenon across the country. Bangladesh is not the only country which only depends on tutors. The World Bank reports that tutors have become a pillar of education in many developing countries.

To Get Higher Grades

School teachers cannot teach English in classroom because of time constraints. They cannot be able to teach the students English in an English class. And, it is difficult for the youngerleaners to understand English grammar in a very short time. Yet they are determined to cut a good figure in the English exam. So, they have to rely upon the private tutors for learning English and also getting good marks in English.

To Decrease the Workload Of the Schoolteachers

Private tutoring decreases the workload of school teachers through helping students understand the sources which aresupplied in the classrooms. All lessons are not possible to teach in the class, so, in this regard, private tutoring plays alternative role to develop the students' potential in English.

Lack of Ample Teachers

In Bangladesh, at the SSC level, students are on the increase by leaps and bounds, but the number of the school teachers is not increasing in comparison with the students. So, it is not feasible for the teachers to provide quality educationin teaching English for all students at the SSC level. As a result, students have to depend on the private tutors due to the lack of ample teachers.

Economic Constraints

Another reason of private tutoring is poor salary of the teachers in Bangladeshat schools. They want to overcome economic crisis, so they are compelled to offer private after school.To

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earn extra income source, schoolteachers are devoted to private tutoring. Moreover, the economic situation of the teachers are not well-to-do, they have no alternative means without depending upon private tutoring. It may be expressed that private tutoring is their second income source policy to lead their family in Bangladesh.

Lack of Scientific Teaching Capability

Our English teachers are not trained up scientifically in teaching English subjects at the SSC level of Bangladesh. One of the main reasons for the spread of private tutoring education strategy is poor teaching and learning capability among the teachers and students. If the teachers could be able to provide postmodern education policyin teaching their students English subjects in the classrooms, the students at the SSC level certainly receive scientific education system from the highly qualified English teachers, but here in Bangladesh, the situation is totally opposite. So the students have to rely upon their tutors.

Necessity of English Learning

There is importantcause of private tutoring is over growing competition at the higher level of education and job market in Bangladesh. Educated and well-to-doguardians expect from their children a very satisfactory result in English subjects in the examination in order that they can be able to get admittedat Public institution, like University, Medical Science, Engineering, Marine Engineering, and Business Faculty at the tertiary level so thatthey can be able to hold the topmost situation in the job market. The necessity of learning English beggars descriptions to the SSC level learners.

Social Pressure

In Bangladesh, most students receive private tuition in English. Sometimes,social pressure dwindle the students and their parents to get involved in private tutoring. Many younger students are completed to teach SSC level students due to family crisis or limited income source in society and family. Social pressure is a very general matter in our Bangladeshi society. It may be a major cause to get engaged in private tutoring.

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Parental High Expectations

Many parents have high expectations for their children' education, especially for English language learning. They think that if their children are good at English subject, in course of time, they can be able to get a lucrative job, and they will be able to have economically developed. So they directly motivate their children to get engaged in private tutoring in English learning so that they can cut a good figure in English subject and in future, their knowledge of English can be able to bring about a significant change in own society and family.

To Improve English Knowledge

In Bangladesh, private tutoring is a common platform for learning English. Students want private tutors, because those tutors help them participate effectively in the classroom activities and therefore, the students at the SSC leveldepend on private tutoring with a view to upgrading their general knowledge of English language. Parents have a notion that if their children learn from the tutors, they would learn English language properly and get a satisfactory marks in English subjects.

Familial Reasons

There are various reasons why people want to be tutored or to teach as tutors. Private supplementary tutoring improves the students' learning and it also provides constructive activities for children during out-of-school hours. (Bray, 2003, p. 14) Often people who can afford to decide to hire a tutor to teach them or their family members English, because this way of learning English language is favorable for them all. Parents choose to employ professionally trained tutors, because they are concerned about their children's capability of learning English at school. When being tutored, learners can choose quantity of education provided -- they have to decide on how they take a lesson according to their needs and financial situations. Also, the most significant opportunity of private tutoring is that students can be taught at home, they do not have to attend any classes beyond house or flat, and they can choose when and for how long they want to be tutored according to what suits them the best, which is convenient, especially for students and people working in various times of day.

Tutors' Reasons

Private tutoring may bring about a potential change in the mental satisfaction of tutors in some families. Some tutors are mainstream teachers who gain extra incomes from supplementary teaching policy, like private tutoring. Others are employees of companies that provide tutoring, or students, retirees or other individuals who are self-employed (Bray, 2005, p. 2). Tutoring can provide a reasonable living for an ESL teacher (one who teaches English as a second language) or an EFL teacher (one who teaches English as a foreign language) at the SSC/HSC/Tertiary level of Bangladesh Education System. It has certain merits, one of which is that the tutors can choose their students, so they can teach the learners they like to work with and then, keep teaching them for many years. Tutoring can also be a well-paid part-time job, which is convenient for the tutors who are students themselves. They can decide on the quantity of tutoring – they can offer individual,or group lessons. They can choose to teach their classmates or the foreign students who have language difficulties (Camenson, 2001, p. 12).

Social Insecurity &Eve-Teaching

Many parents don't want send the female children outside home due to social insecurity in Bangladesh. Social insecurity is a very common problem for the female students in the city or in the urban areas. For instance, eve-teaching is on the increase swiftly across the country, while any female student leaves home for private tutoring, their parents are very anxious for their children. Due to the fear of eve-teaching, sensitive parents employ tutors at home. At wealthy family, parents don't like send their female students outside of home for private tutoring.

Negative Aspects of Private Tutoring

Private tutoring has also negative aspects of English learning in Bangladesh. There have many negative attitudes towards private tutoring. At schools, the number of absentees rose high due to private tutoring. Sometimes private tutoring is reported to have a negative effect on mainstream classes. Yasmeen (1999) expressed her view regarding the practices of private tutoring:

> Most students tend to rely on private tutors for everything including homework and
> exam tips. As a result classroom attention tends to dwindle creating discipline problems

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for schoolteachers. Supplementary or top-up teaching is becoming more important than the synergistic classroom experience. (Bray, 2003, p.30)

Students do not pay adequate attention to their lessons, because they have already covered the topics with the help of tutors, and also they are not satisfied by the teaching process of their schoolteachers. The majority of students think that the quality of instruction in the tuition class is much better rather school teaching at the SSC level. They express their comments as follows:

This has a negative impact upon due respect they have self-confidence in the classroom teacher and his teaching policy. Negative students' behavior and non-participation in the teaching-learning process turn them into poor quality teaching, for which they have to adhere to private tutoring, and private tuition also leads to negative students' behavior in the class, which in turn turns to deterioration of classroom teaching. (My Translation)

Private tutoring practice improves welfare in family and society, but it also increase disparity between students and teachers. Many parents who have much property as well as financial support can provide more books, learning instruments, and even full-time tutors for the development of their children. But, on the contrary, low income or poor parents cannot provide financial supports for their children, and cannot be able to pay for private tuition fee in time. Thus, private tutoring increases financial crisis among the poor income families in Bangladesh. When students of SSC level are away from home and their parents, sometimes, family bonds gets weakened. This is one of the negative aspects of private tutoring. Sometimes students go to tutoring classes without taking food or rest and they return home late and get tired. So I think, private tutoring weakens their health and mentality.

Private tutoring puts extra loads on the students who attend both regular class at school and private tutoring class. It affects the daily life of students for which they are fully deprived of extracurricular activities, recreational activities.Moreover, the negative aspects of private

tutoring as stated above,I think, there are some major psychological problems between female students and tutors, which are very much common practical issues published in the Daily News and telecast in the social media all the year round. In my opinion, these common problems may be mentioned below:

Physical Relation

Due to regular private tutoring at tutor's home and private room, there occurs a physical relation between teachers and female students. This current situation is greatly noticed across the country. Female students of SSC level are, of course, immature and innocent mind. They have no practical knowledge of life, and even familial concerns of their own. Emotionally, both teachers and students get engaged themselves in physical relation each other. They fail to control emotion, feeling and fancy. Tutors in Bangladesh are like vagabonds, most of them have no permanent residence or dwelling place, they just tutor female students for the temporary basis to bear education expenses, to maintain familial crisis, and to lead a fops and foolish life style in the urban and city areas in today's Bangladesh. Anyway, I think, this type of physical relation becomes a severe problem for the immature ones.

Early Marriage

Many a times, in Bangladeshi society and family, private tutoring may be regarded as a negative issue of early marriage. Both students and teachers get themselves married very early in their immature life without parental consents and permission. Early marriage, I think, brings about a tragic downfall in the minds of both teachers and students. As we know that Bangladesh sometimes fails to afford her large population economically and socially. At such critical and juncture situation, if early marriage is on the increase due to private tutoring, the nation will have to face a hurdled situation.

Familial Crisis

Separation, divorce, and familial crisis are now-a-days observed due to private tutoring. Many married tutors are addicted to illicit relationship with their female students. Sometimes they get married their students, keeping the while matter secret to their students and even to their

own family. Immature students unknowingly fall victim of familial crisis. As a result, the future dream and expectation of female students remain unfulfilled and unveiled. At one time they have to bear a big burden on their shoulders throughout their life, So, I think, private tutoring is one the major causes of familial crisis in postmodern times. Besides these, there are many negatives sides of private tutoring, which I would investigate in my future research writing.

Methodology& Data Collection

For documentation of this project, I have followed the APA (6th edition) style. In this qualitative method, data about the practices and policies of private tutoring were collected from different types of participants, including--schoolteachers, tutors, students of SSC level and their parents. In this field survey, 10 teachers (both schoolteachers and tutors), 20-25 students, and 15 parents did take an active part at the English Language Teaching Home of Tongi under the district of Gazipur, Bangladesh. The sample for the teachers, students andparents was a convenience sample as some of them were unwilling to express regarding privatetuition fee/monthly paymentbasis face to face while the interview was being taken. The participants were asked to fill up a survey form. Through the field survey formfor the schoolteachers and tutors, reasons for giving private tuition, the common organization of a typical tuitionsession, how the tuition sessions wereconnected to the task done at the SSC level of students near by a coaching centre at Tongi, their assigned teachers and other important information about private tutoring and its tuition were investigated. Further clarifications were done through an interview with other students and guidance. The sample of studentswere asked to fill another survey form relating to the reasons for taking private tuition in English Language Learning, how private tutoring helps the students of the SSC level understand English grammatical knowledge, reading comprehension, composition, application, paragraph, letter, story writing.The researcher had to spend 15 days to collect data so that he could enable to show a faithful picture of private tutoring at the SSC level of the 21st –century Bangladesh EFL learners.

The researcher proposed the topics for discussion during the interview process, but asked few specific questions. (Rubin & Rubin, 1995) During each of the interviews, the researcher recorded the interview and prompted the participants to express what they thought were the

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reasons of their resorting to private tutoring in learning English language, and what effects private tutoring had on students' learning capability.

Because the format of the different types of interviewing process was open, some participants responded with more details, while others simply agreed with what had been said. Students' and parents' interviews lasted for approximately 2 hours and 1.5 hours, respectively. After the interviews were completed, the researcher went through the audio recording, and transcribed the two interviews by noting complete thoughts and useful information.

Data Analysis

The content of the participants' responses in different types of interviews was investigated and coded. According to Rubin and Rubin (1995), "Coding is the process of grouping interviewees' responses into categories that bring together the similar ideas, concepts, or themes you have discovered". (p. 238) In coding the interview data, the researcher underlined or circled words, phrases, or sentences that caught his attention and that had potential toserve as a category. This procedure enabled the researcher to gather new information into categories or central themes, including To get Higher Grades, to decrease the Workload of the Schoolteachers, lack of ample teachers, economic constraints, lack of scientific teaching capability, necessity of English learning, social pressure, parental high expectations, to improve English knowledge, familial reasons, tutors' reasons, social insecurity &eve-teaching, and so on.

Participants like schoolteachers, tutors, students of the SSC level, and their parents groups did express different views about the causes and impacts of English private tutoring on English Language Learning. Responses from the participantswere compiled and problems and reasons for private tutoring emerged from the data.

Findings of the Study

This research project shows that most of the students of SSC level have to depend upon the private tutors throughout the country rather than their school teachers due to time constraints in the classroom. Students have to face different types of social problems for private tutoring in Bangladesh, especially for girls, like eve-teasing, kidnapping, psychological problems and so on.

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Due to economic constraints, both teachers and tutors get themselves involved in private tutoring with a view to maintaining familial demands. This study also shows that both teachers and tutors regard private tutoring as a weapon of income source in a developing country, like Bangladesh. Many poor parents cannot afford to bear educational expenses for private tutoring because they are financially poor and weak. Anyway, many students and their guardians think that it is not possible to cut a good figure in the SSC examination without private tutoring though the present Government is trying to ban this system.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This research project dealt with the reasons and problems of private tutoring in English for the students of the SSC level in Bangladesh. From the above discussion it can be said that private tutoring has not only positive aspects, but also negative aspects. Private tutors help their studentssolve the complex problems of what they cannot be able to learn from their schoolteachers. The weaker students need learning supports in English subjects which can be provided by the private tutors. It would not be a wise decision for the Bangladesh Government to ban the private tutoring centers. Learners should understand why they need private tutors and how they can be benefitted from their tutors. So Bangladesh Government should raise awareness about the practical merits of private tutoring for the students of SSC level.

Private tutoring has both positive and negative aspects. Parents and students ought not to rely on private tutors. We would try to find outbetter effects of private tutoring and make the best use of it. So some important recommendations are given below:

- ➢ At first, the teaching system of our schools should be modified and updated. Large number of students in a class is the core of these problems. As there are too many students, teachers could not give their proper attention to all students in the class.
- ➢ Another problem is while teaching, English is not given priority. In the class, all subjects are taught in a proper way, and English should be taught like other subjects. But, I think, English, including grammar, reading comprehension, vocabulary, and writing skill need to be given special care.
- ➢ After studying English for so many years, students cannot be able to communicate in English satisfactorily. So, it needs to be practiced more and more. In this case, students

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can take help from their private tutors to make English language learning very effectively.

➢ Weaker students can be sent to private tutors for a scheduled time. Private tutors should try to find outtheir problematic issues and try to solve them as earliest possible.

➢ Lastly, I recommendthat school teachers, private tutors, students and even their parents should be conscious of all subjects, especially Mathematics, English, Accounting, and Science. The Government should provide scientific training approach for the teachers. English learning centre ought to be established at schools; expert teachers should be appointed to develop the potential of the students.

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Md Abu Nayeem
Senior Lecturer
Department of English
Southeast University
A R Tower, 24, Kemal Ataturk Avenue
Dhaka 1213
Bangladesh
nayeemcps@gmail.com

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