CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTING ENGLISH CURRICULUM AT RURAL PRIMARY SCHOOLS OF BANGLADESH

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Abstract

Primary level English curriculum implementation is essential in Bangladesh to achieve the set English language competencies in the rural areas. The main purpose of this study was to find out the challenges of implementing English curriculum at primary level in rural schools of Bangladesh. The current study was a mixed method research by nature. Two sets of questionnaires were used to collect data from students and teachers of rural areas to understand the views and situation of English Language teaching and learning. Besides, interviews were conducted with the teachers and English teaching sessions were observed using an observation checklist in order to find out the present situation of primary level English Curriculum implementing process and challenges. The study indicates that most of the rural schools students are poor in English language due to lack of skilled teachers, proper teacher training, using proper teaching methods and materials, physical facilities and so on. As a result English curriculum implementation at primary level in Bangladesh is becoming unsuccessful.

KEY WORDS: English curriculum, language competencies, language practices, second language

1. INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of using language is to communicate one’s needs, necessities, feelings, thoughts and ideas to others (Banu, 2009). Empirical studies indicate that many of the primary graduates are failing to learn language skills that they can use effectively (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998; Ahmed & Nath, 2005). To learn language, comprehension strategies need to be more explicitly discussed and
individual interpretation of texts need to be valued inside the classroom. Children need to learn different reading strategies, for example, scanning, skimming, and locating information throughout the text to solve different reading problems. All learning experiences do not necessarily lead to learning, unless subsequent opportunities for reflection, application, correlation and consolidation are created (Shukla, 2008). Vygotsky’s (1978) research brought the importance of language for learning to the fore. Interactive communication in collaborative learning experiences help learners to develop their thinking through language, and develop their language through thinking. According to Brown (2001),

*Interaction is the collaborative exchange of thoughts, feeling or ideas between two or more people, resulting in a reciprocal effect on each other. Theories of communicative competence emphasize the importance of interaction as human beings use language in various contexts to ‘negotiate’ meaning, or simply stated, to get an idea out of one person’s head and into the head of another person and vice versa (p 165).*

English has become the modern lingua franca, i.e. the language of communication among speakers of other languages. As such, English can help bridge communication barriers across cultures. The last decade or so has been marked by a new phenomenon called globalization. This has a profound impact on different domains of life such as social, political and economic. It has also experienced significant changes in the communication dynamics of the world. English language is the most crucial gear of this new communication euphoria. English as a subject is of paramount importance in equipping the students to take up the challenges of the competitive survival and growing globalization in developing countries. English is the dominant language of international business and economic development, and that dominance continues to grow with the continued globalization of business through mergers and international investment. This is high time we started to see the future development of English as a world language and took proper initiatives to develop our English language learners to a global standard in Bangladesh (Rahman, 2009). The global distributions of English are often described in terms of three contexts such as English as a Native Language (ENL), English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Thus the diffusion of English throughout the world is seen in territories, viz., ENL territories, ESL territories and EFL territories (McArthur, 1996). Although officially English is a national second language in Bangladesh, this does not make Bangladesh an ESL country, as there exists mainly a non-Anglophone environment outside the English classrooms. The CLT (Communicative language teaching) situation in Bangladesh is thus comparable to other EFL countries (Karim, 2004).

The main objectives of teaching English in primary level education in Bangladesh are to enable students to understand simple commands, instructions, and requests in English and also carry them out (National Curriculum and Textbook Board, 2006). The students speak and converse in simple English according to this age level and read to comprehend the textbooks set for their age group and level. They also write words, simple sentences, passages, paragraphs, informal letters and numbers according to their age group and level. NCTB prepared English curriculum for primary level to consider proper approaches and method although unfortunately the curriculum is not implemented properly especially in rural areas (Sadek, 2002). Most of the students of rural schools are unable to attain the primary English language competencies due to prevailing challenges in our education system. The
main objective of this research is to find out the challenges of implementing English curriculum at primary level in rural schools in Bangladesh.

2. PRESENT STATUS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN BANGLADESH

Necessity of teaching English in the South Asian subcontinent was addressed first time in Lord Macaulay’s minute of 1835 (Krishnaswamy & Sriraman, 1995). Macaulay in his Minutes expressed the importance and usefulness of the education that would be given to the natives through the medium of English. He mentioned two objectives of such education. The first was to create a class of natives who despite their blood and color through this education; would be English in culture and be able to "interpret" between the rulers and the subjects. The second was to create a "demand" for the European institutions. Clearly both the objectives were designed to serve the interest of the Masters, not of the subjects. When it published, he said, "it will be the proudest day in English history" (Sadek, 2002).

In Bangladesh, During the Pakistan period, as a legacy to British rule, English was a second language. The educated or even fairly educated people had to use English in offices, profession, education and other purposes. However, after the war of liberation in 1971, in independent Bangladesh, the official status of the English language changed to a foreign language. In this monolingual country people do almost everything in Bengali and did not use English in real life communication. They started facing problems when they were required to communicate in English. Moreover, recently the EFL situation in post liberation Bangladesh, English has regained an important unofficial status.

English is used in many government, semi-government and private organisations along with Bengali (Ainy, 2001). The term curriculum can refer to a variety of things, including the courses taught in a school or a program, the document that list the courses taught, a set of teaching materials that are organized in some sequences of framework, or a framework for selecting and organizing learning experiences (Howel & Wolet, 2005). English curriculum at primary level of Bangladesh indicates the aims, learning outcome, teaching methods and techniques, teaching aids and materials, and evaluation system. Making English study effective from primary to tertiary levels needs a lot of inputs and resources like trained teachers, communicative teaching materials; and financial, infra-structural and management facilities. These resources are not equally available or favorable for learning English in all the educational institutions of the country. In some urban elite schools, these inputs are mostly available and the school leavers can use English, more or less, in their further study or in jobs that they choose. But most of the rural schools lack in some or almost all these resources (Sadek, 2002).

Teaching-learning English in the rural schools cannot be done in the way it should be done. In most cases, learning English means rote learning of grammar rules and textbook contents even without understanding. But unfortunately there is discrimination between urban and rural primary school students’ English language learning. Students from urban areas show better proficiency in comparison with the students from rural areas. Most of the urban students watch cable television; have easy access to cyber café; a good number of them read English newspapers. As a result, the urban students, often have the opportunity to use English outside their classroom. In some urban schools computer education has been made compulsory from very early years of schooling. This helps the students to learn and to use English words and vocabulary items related to information communication technology (ICT). Their proficiency level is, therefore, much higher than that of the rural students. This is worth noting in different competitive examinations like admission tests in different universities and institutions, job interviews and other competitions. In most cases the urban
competitors especially, those from the metropolis do better than others (Hasan, 2004).

3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The main aim of this study was to investigate the challenges of implementing English curriculum at primary level in rural schools of Bangladesh. To investigate the challenges, the specific objectives of this study are:

1) To find out the present situation of English teaching-learning process in primary rural schools of Bangladesh.
2) To identify the problems to implement the English curriculum in primary rural schools of Bangladesh.
3) To suggest the way of emancipation from the challenges of implementing English curriculum at rural primary schools.

4. SIGNIFICANCE

For the development of Bangladesh, we need a large number of human capitals. To build the human capital, English is essential in the present age of information and technology of 21st century. Bangladesh sustains one of the largest primary education systems in the world with as many as 80401 primary institutions of 10 different kinds namely, Government Primary School, Registered Non-Government Primary School, Non-Registered Non-Government Primary School, Experimental schools, Community schools, Kindergartens, NGO schools, Ebtedae madrasas, primary sections of high madrasas, primary sections of high schools (Rabbi, n. d). Among these primary schools, most of the schools are in rural areas of Bangladesh. Primary education is called fundamental education to build a child. For this reason primary education is emphasized in all declaration for the development of education of every nation and it is important to create a base of English at primary level. According to Burg (2006), 2-13 years is the proper time for learning language. So, English curriculum implementation is necessary from primary level in Bangladesh.

In the beginning of primary level, necessary steps must be taken to have a good grounding in English for the student through effective teaching. But there are many problems to implement English curriculum at primary level in rural areas. Rural areas students are not able to grasp English Language very well in many cases. Moreover, in acquiring primary level competencies and learning outcomes, the achievement rate is questionable among the rural primary school students, especially in English subject. So the aim of English language teaching at primary level is going to be futile. There are some logical reasons for this lagging behind in rural areas. Since the focus of this study is to find out the challenges of implementing English curriculum at primary level in rural area of Bangladesh, it will help to understand the present situation of English language learning process and illustrate the challenges of implementing English curriculum. The result would be a guideline for the government, school authorities, incumbent education officers and other non-government organizations who work for improving English language skills at primary level.

5. METHODOLOGY

The study was concerned to find out the present situation of English teaching-learning processes in rural areas and to identify the nature of the problems to implement the English curriculum in Bangladesh. It was designed in mixed approach. Data and evidence were gathered from a range of sources by using a combination of different data collection tools. Questionnaire, observation check list tools were used to follow the quantitative approach while interview was conducted as qualitative approach.

This research was conducted in the rural area and covered Ramgonj Thana of Laxmipur district, Bangladesh. To select the sample of schools,
purposive sampling procedure was employed. Thirty schools were selected for collecting data. Three hundred students, 10 from each school were selected for data collection. For selecting students, only grade III, IV and V were considered. Grade I and II were not considered because English is not taught formally at these levels. Thirty English teachers, one from each selected school, whose classes were observed, were considered as respondents for data collection through questionnaire; and other ten English teachers, whose classes were not observed, were selected for interviews to find out in-depth information. Thirty classrooms, one from each school were observed to find out the challenges of English curriculum implementing in rural areas.

A questionnaire was developed which included mostly close ended and some open ended questions for the students to identify their views about the challenges in implementation of English curriculum in rural areas at primary level. Another questionnaire was used to collect data from those teachers whose classes were observed to find out the present situation of English teaching at primary level in rural areas. Ten English teachers, whose classes were not observed, were selected by purposive sampling for interviews. Interview was conducted to investigate the teachers’ views about the challenges of English curriculum implementation at primary level. Observation checklist was used to find out class room teaching-learning conditions and procedures towards English language learning.

6. DATA ANALYSIS
6.1. Questionnaire for students

6.1.1. Studying English

From all respondents, 64% consent that they read English regularly whether 36% consent that they do not read English regularly. From the respondents who do not read English regularly, 86% believe that English is hard, 5% do not get interest in English and 9% students think that teachers do not make them understand clearly and as a result they do not like to study English.

![Figure 1(A): Study of English regularly](image)

![Figure 1(B): Causes of irregularity](image)
6.1.2. Ways of capturing lesson

Among the all respondents, 5% learn lessons understanding by themselves, 5% learn in teacher’s class, 40% learn by reading guidebooks, 50% learn with the help of private tutors.

![Figure 2: Ways of capturing lesson](image)

6.1.3. Speaking exercise in the classroom

From all the students, 10% consent that English teachers always make speaking exercise in the class while 38% consent that English teachers sometimes make speaking exercise in the classrooms and 52% admit that English teacher rarely make speaking exercise in the class.

![Figure 3: Speaking exercise in the classroom](image)

6.1.4. Writing exercise in the classroom

Primary school students at rural areas of Bangladesh claim that teacher don’t make regular writing exercise. From all the students, 3% consent that English teacher always make writing exercise regularly while 54 % sometimes make writing exercise in the class whether 43% think that English teacher rarely make writing exercise in the class.

![Figure 4: Writing exercise in the classroom](image)
6.1.5. Reading exercise in the classroom

From all the students, 13% consent that English teacher always make reading exercise in the class whether 78% consent that sometimes English teacher make reading exercise and 9% think that English teacher rarely make reading exercise in the class.

![Figure 5: Reading exercise in the classroom](image)

6.1.6. Listening exercise in the class

Unfortunately, all students claim that no primary teacher make listening practice in classroom.

6.2. Questionnaire for teachers

6.2.1. Follow the instructions of teachers’ guide

Among all the respondents, 30% teacher consent that they sometimes follow the primary level teacher guide where 70% teacher don’t follow teaching process instructed by the teacher guide.

![Figure 6: Follow the instructions of teachers’ guide](image)

6.2.2. Knowledge about the aims, objectives of English

Among all teachers, 17% consent they know the aims, objectives of primary level whether 83% teacher do not know the aims, objectives of primary level.

![Figure 7: Knowledge about the aims, objectives of English](image)
6.2.3. Training participation for professional skill development

Among the respondents, 57% participated in training for professional development whether 43% didn’t take any professional development training.

![Figure 8: Training participation of professional skill development](image)

6.2.4. Training to teach English

From all the teachers, 23% have taken training to teach English whether it is horrified found that 77% have not taken any training to teach English.

![Figure 9: Training to teach English](image)

6.2.5. Lesson plan preparation

Among the respondents, 33% consent that they teach after making lesson plan where 67% consent that they don’t make lesson plan to teach.

![Figure 10: Lesson Plan Preparation](image)
6.2.6. Using of language in English class

Among the respondents, 60% teacher consent that they give lesson in the class in Bangla language, 7% consent that they take class by using English and 33% consent that they use both Bangla and English.

![Figure 11: Using of language in English class](image)

6.2.7. Use of teaching aid and instructional materials to teach English

In this study, 7% teacher use teaching aid always to teach English, 41% often use teaching aids where 52% never use teaching aids to teach English.

![Figure 12: Use of teaching aid and instructional materials to teach English](image)

6.2.8. Method of teaching in English class

All teachers in this study use lecture method and sometimes they use participatory technique within lecture method.

6.3. Classroom observation checklist

6.3.1. Class room management

From the observation of classroom, it was found that 2% teachers are excellent in terms of classroom management, 10% teachers are good in terms of classroom management, 39% are in average performer, and 39% are in below average conditions where 10% teachers are totally unable in terms of classroom management.
6.3.2. Students’ motivation towards learning

From the observation of the classrooms, it was found that 33% teachers are in average condition in terms of students’ motivation towards learning which is measured on the basis of using various ways of giving motivation, 60% are in below average means they try little bit to motivate their students where 7% teachers don’t have any intention to teach students perfectly and they don’t try to motivate students towards learning.

6.3.3. Learners’ participation in classroom activities

It was found that 7% learners are in good in terms of learner’s participation in the classroom activities, 7% are in average and 86% are in below average which focus that students are inactive to the classroom as a result they can’t learn properly.
6.3.4. Teachers’ in-depth knowledge of subject matter

It was found that 7% teacher have good in depth knowledge of subject matter, 20% have average in depth knowledge and 66% are in below average which focus that most of the teachers are not good at English language as a result they can’t teach properly.

![Teachers’ in-depth knowledge of subject matter](image)

6.3.5. Classroom learning environment

By observing the classroom, it came out that 27% school have average classroom learning environment, 73% have below average classroom learning environment.

![Classroom learning environment](image)

6.3.6. Time management

From the observation, it was found that 5% teachers are excellent in time management while 20% teacher are good in time management, 35% are in average in time management, 25% teachers are below average in time management and 15% teachers do not maintain any time schedule which effect students learning.

![Time management](image)
6.3.7. Technique of evaluation

From the observation of sample classroom, it was found that 7% teachers followed excellent evaluation technique and 21% teachers are good in using technique of evaluation, 15% are in average, 27% are in below average and 30% are totally unable to use technique of evaluation as a result they can’t evaluate students learning.

![Figure 19: Technique of evaluation](image)

6.3.8. Ways of giving feedback

By observing the classrooms, it was found that only 2% teacher’s have excellent feedback ability while 16% have good feedback ability and 28% average skill to give appropriate feedback, 25% are in below average and 29% teacher’s have no skills or do not give feedback to the students learning.

![Figure 20: Ways of giving feedback](image)

6.4. Interview of teachers:

Ten English teachers, whose class was not observed, were selected for interviews. Interview was conducted to find the teachers view about the challenges of English curriculum implementation at primary level. Teachers’ responses have been analyzed in qualitative approach.

6.4.1. English Subject related training

Most of the teacher consented that they did not take any subject related training because they didn’t get any offer from PTI or from other training institutions to take training. But one of the interviewee told that he had English subject based training in PTI where another teacher had sub-cluster training.
6.4.2. Management of classroom from beginning to end

Most of the teachers told that at first they call the students’ roll and then they asked students to open their book. Later they asked about their homework and after that they usually started their teaching using the textbooks. They tried to make students understand their lessons. If any student raises any question, they tried to solve that problem and at the end of the class, they give homework and leave the class. It was found from nine respondents out of ten where one of the respondents told that he tried to motivate students at first and then he started his lesson by telling some related stories. He tried to explain the English lesson carefully and at the end of the study he gave feedback.

6.4.3. Teaching aids

Most of the teacher consent that they use only blackboard, chalk and duster. One of the teachers told that he sometimes use word card also. All of the teachers told that they do not get any support to use extra teaching material from the school, government and non-government donor agencies. They also claim that they everyday take eight classes on average and as a result they also do not get interest to use extra teaching aids.

6.4.4. Implementation of teaching-learning techniques mentioned in the curriculum

All of the teachers except one in this study admit that they do not have any idea about the English curriculum as a result they are not able to apply the prescribed teaching-learning techniques of the curriculum in the class. While one teacher who took training from PTI, admit that sometimes he tries to use mentioned teaching learning techniques of the curriculum but most of time he can not follow the techniques because of large number of students and the worse learning environment.

6.4.5. Steps taken for students to become active in the classroom

Most of the teachers consent that they do not take any steps for the students to become active in the class. If students make noises, they try to stop that but they do not have any intention to make the students active in teaching learning processes. But two teachers admit that they make students active by using group work technique and dialogue based pair work. Sometimes they expect questions from the students and they also throw some questions to the students. In such processes they try to make active participation of students for effective English language learning.

6.4.6. Steps taken for the weak and special featured students in teaching

Most of the teacher consent that they try to make understand the subject matter again and again who are weak and special featured students and they give priority to them. One teacher added that he sometimes calls their parents and suggests them what is their duty to the weak and special featured students and sometimes he goes to special need students’ home and gives inspiration to study a lot by telling about the probable bright future the students might get if they study well.

6.4.7. Steps taken for achieving the learning objective

All of the teachers admit that they do not take any repeated steps if learning objectives have not been achieved because they do not have enough time to review the lesson. Actually, all of teachers admit that they do not have clear idea about the learning objectives and they do not have any skills to measure the learning objectives achieved or not.
6.4.8. Problems for Implementing English curriculum in school

All of the interviewees consent that there is a lot of problems to implement English curriculum such as high teacher-student ratio and small class size. Insufficient teaching aids is the common problem for which they can’t follow effective teaching-learning approach and lack of subject based training is the one of the main problems to implement the English curriculum. Unavailability of teacher guide (TG) is another barrier in implementing the primary English curriculum. All interviewees said that each teacher take seven or eight classes a day; as a result they cannot take good preparation for taking classes. All of the teachers claim that they have no language lab facilities for which students were unable to practice listening which is one of the key and authentic sources of learning English language. They also admitted that lack of proper physical facilities such as school building, classroom size, electricity supply; library and books availability, hygienic toilet etc. are also liable for learning environment. Inadequate physical facilities affect adversely in English curriculum implementation process in rural areas of Bangladesh.

6.4.9. Suggestions to overcome English curriculum implementation problems

All of the interviewees consent that to overcome these problems government should take proper initiative such as recruit more teachers in primary school to decline teacher-student ratio, provide more teaching aids and subject based training and assure the supply of teacher guide in time. They also suggest that various non-government organizations can also help to solve those problems.

7. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

To be skilled in a language especially the language which is not mother tongue is needed regular practice (Sadek, 2002). It is found in this research that English seems to be a terrifying subject to rural students although most of the students try to read English regularly. In Bangladesh, most of the primary schools are located in rural areas. In spite of having majority in number, the rural primary schools are deprived of modern facilities for learning. As a result, it directly affects students’ English learning and it is the reason for students’ menace in English in spite of practicing English regularly. Sadek (2002) explained that English seems obscure language to rural students because teachers do not use joyful learning strategy. For this menace, most of the rural students are not able to make good result in English.

It is found that all school authorities do not put emphasize in English learning and to provide schools with teaching-learning materials. They also do not negotiate with higher authority about prevailing problems of English language learning. Most of the teachers complain that they don’t get support especially in teaching-learning materials and training from school authority which is responsible for weak teaching. Rahman (2003) expressed that school authorities are always busy to get money for themselves and they give concentration rarely to school welfare. It is one of the main challenges of implementing English curriculum at rural primary schools for which teachers can not use effective methodology in class room and that is liable to poor proficiency in English language in rural areas.

It is found that most of the teachers have no training about English teaching. In teaching, training participation for professional skill development helps teacher to enrich their knowledge about teaching methodology, using teaching materials, accurate evaluation system, management etc. Salma (2001) said that English teaching mostly depends on training but many teachers do not have English language teaching training. Trained teacher are reluctant to use their training because they are rarely supervised. Hasan (2004) stated that although primary teachers are expected to teach English as a compulsory subject
from class one, there is no ELT provision in PTIs (Primary Training Institute). It is found that most of the teachers of primary schools in rural areas don’t take training to teach English and for that reason they do not know how to teach students effectively. It is found that all teachers use only lecture method and they do not have any knowledge of modern language learning methods and techniques. It is a pressing matter to implement English curriculum at rural schools for which English turns out to be dull and difficult subject to the students.

Teacher guide is an important instructional material. It helps teacher to follow proper teaching methods and conduct classroom activities perfectly as desired in the curriculum document. Sadek (2002) found in his research that large number of teachers do not have teacher’s guide because the government do not provide them which was also claimed by the teachers of this study. In this research, it is found that most of the teachers do not know about teachers guide though some teachers heard about the guide. As a result teachers can not conduct English language class effectively which is also a concerning matter in implementing English curriculum at rural primary schools.

Curriculum is the heart of education system which indicates the education aims, objectives and learning outcomes (Hasan, 2004). It helps teacher to conduct their teaching in classroom. To implement English language curriculum at primary level, teachers’ knowledge about the aims, objectives of English curriculum is very essential (Rahman, 2003). But this research found that most of the primary school teachers are not aware of the aims, objectives of English curriculum. When most of the teachers do not know the English curriculum aims and objectives, it is tough to achieve expected curriculum goal which is one of main hindrances for implementing curriculum. Due to this lacking of curriculum knowledge, teachers become unable to conduct English language class in a proper way and this may affect students’ English language proficiency.

Lesson plan is the preparatory teaching-learning materials which facilitate teachers to conduct classes effectively. To implement English curriculum, preparing lesson plan is very indispensable (Sadek, 2002). It was explored by Hasan (2004) that very few teachers know how it should be made and most of the teachers thought a lesson plan is just the list of topics or subtopics that they will teach in the classes. It is found in this research that most of the teachers complain that they take minimum eight classes on average per day as a result they can not get time to make lesson plan which is the challenge of conducting English language class. It is also a barrier of implementing English language curriculum at rural primary schools because teachers may fail to conduct English language class in full swing by considering class time, lesson and students’ demand which may affect students’ English learning negatively.

A stimulating atmosphere for language teaching can be created by displaying posters, charts, maps, advertisements, timetables and signs together with works produced by the students themselves in the classroom. In fact teaching aids that can be used in language class are enormous and their use would be suitable and appropriate to the students needs (Hasan, 2004). But it was found that most of the teachers do not use necessary teaching aids and instructional materials except chalk and duster. Teaching aids and instructional materials are very important to motivate students towards learning and to capture the English content knowledge easily. To liberate rural students from fear of English language learning, use of teaching aids and instructional materials are indispensable (Rahman, 2003). For the negligence of using teaching aids and instructional materials by the teachers, students do not get attraction to learn English which is concerning matter for implementing English curriculum at rural primary schools and it may be a
reason for the weakness at English language to the rural students.

Continuous assessment throughout the academic year is fundamental factor to any proper evaluation system. Essentially, this means that the students should only move on to any new item, when the previous one has been sufficiently understood. Of course, every new item should be sufficiently recycled for better understanding and for that the students get mastery over that (Hasan, 2004). Continuous assessment system and giving feedback is essential to judge students achievement, weakness and emancipation of weakness in any subject (Sadek, 2002). It is found in this research that most of the teachers neglect continuous assessment system and show lethargy to give feedback which is also liable to leg behind in English language curriculum implementation because students can not judge their proficiency level of English language and can not able to find out their weak point in English language.

The main goal of English language teaching at primary level is that the students will understand simple instructions in English and carry them out. But unfortunately there is no practice of listening activities in the classroom (Sadek, 2002). It is found that no schools have any listening lab which is an unexpected scenario for learning English. Lack of language lab or listening instrument might cause the students’ not to have the proper opportunity to practice English listening because listening is important skill of language learning. Without listening practice of English language, perfect pronunciation and speaking style can not be followed (Sadek, 2002). It is the hindrance of English language curriculum implementation at rural primary schools because students can not understand simple instructions in English and carry them out.

It is found in this research that most of the teachers rarely make speaking practice while they sometimes make reading and writing practice. Most of the primary teachers’ speaking skill is not good (Rahman, 2003) and as a result they do not make speaking practice in the class. Sadek (2002) stated that all primary teachers of rural school conduct English language class by using Bangla. Rural primary teachers make writing and reading practice sometimes but the ways of making writing and reading practice is questionable because they do not know the proper way of making practice these skills. Hasan (2004) explained that most of teachers (especially, those from rural areas) cannot write a piece of text (a letter or paragraph) of their own. They hardly listen to any English TV program. They rarely use English to communicate with their students in English classes. They rarely read any English newspaper or any book written in English. While teaching, these teachers strive more on how far they can ensure that their students can cut good marks in their examinations.

Lack of adequate English teachers in the schools is also concerning matter for which teachers of other subjects have to take the English classes but they don’t have in-depth knowledge and training in English. Sadek (2002) stated that in both categories of government and non-government school, there have no sufficient English language teachers in rural primary school which hamper students English language learning. So, more English teacher recruitment is needed in primary schools which can enhance the English language learning in this level especially in rural areas.

8. CONCLUSION

Since English is the foreign language to the people of Bangladesh, students of our country find it a complex task in their education. Considering the global needs, English was implemented as a compulsory subject since 1977 at primary level in this context. It is a matter of great sorrow that effective implementation of English curriculum is still far away. Especially in rural areas of Bangladesh, English is yet the matter of fear for students. Urban
students are comparatively adroit in English language because school teachers are skilled in English language teaching and they get support from parents and house tutors. But in rural areas, most of the parents are not educated and unable to spend money for private tutor. If schools teacher become qualified and conscious to teach students, it will be helpful for rural students to learn English effectively. To emancipate the fear of English language learning among the rural students and to achieve the curriculum goals and objectives, government and non-government organizations, whose are trying to improve English language skills of rural primary schools student, should take some short and long terms plan by considering existent condition of English language learning and the prevailing problems which are hindrances for implementing English curriculum.

This study explored some challenges of implementing English curriculum at primary level in rural areas of Bangladesh. Higher teacher-student ratio, lack of effective teacher training, lack of quality teacher, unavailability of language skills learning tools are the most problematic factors towards implementing English curriculum effectively in rural areas. Recruiting high qualified and subject specialist teacher, providing adequate training for their professional development, increasing salary level so that they can respect their own jobs and proving sufficient materials for learning language skills could the solution of these problems. Here we would like to encourage other researchers to do a comparative research about urban and rural student’s competency in English language and find out the solutions to overcome the thwarts of English language learning. As the people of a developing country, we cannot depend just on our mother tongue for communication since we are not self dependent at all. For this reason, learning English is indispensable for worldwide communication, as English is used mostly in international perspective. But keeping the problems alive it is next to impossible to cope with the demands of the present world. Therefore, it is expected that the authority will be concern to solve the existing problems.

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