

FUTURE UNDERGRADUATE ENGLISH LANGUAGE CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN BANGLADESH

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Abstract:

Present Government of Bangladesh has taken a vow to transform underdeveloped Bangladesh to a developed one and it is moving forward with the slogan of 'Digital Bangladesh'. Government of Bangladesh is determined to reshape the existing teaching-learning pattern in world-class mode by applying technology and curriculum renovation formula and it is quite clear from the National Education Policy 2010 published by the Ministry of Education. Bangladesh Government has put much emphasis on English language skill development at all the sectors of education. Our English curriculum is not learner-centered and nor does it take into account the market demand and stakeholders' requirements. Now-a-days English graduates are opting for various professions in Bangladesh, but, to tell frankly, their curriculum is not preparing them to enter diverse professions. General objective of this research is to figure out a future career-oriented undergraduate English curriculum for sustainable development. To meet the goals of SDG (SDG-4) an updated curriculum plays a significant role and Bangladesh is working to materialize the SDG goals. This study follows qualitative approach and it is based on document analysis. This study looks into the existing undergraduate English curriculum in Bangladesh, makes an in-depth analysis, points out its shortcomings and finally proposes a technology-based, career-oriented, learner-friendly, skill-based curriculum. Curriculum theories and foundations of education have been taken into consideration. Moreover, English curricula of two universities of Nepal have been consulted. The policy makers and curriculum developers will find the findings of the study relevant.

Keywords: Sustainable Development, Curriculum, Undergraduate, Skill-based, Job-oriented

Introduction:

For producing competent graduates a skill-based, job-focused and morality-driven curriculum is required. A curriculum which combines knowledge as well as skill is sought-after by employers of today. For such curriculum, developing curriculum in line with curriculum theories is essential. University English departments in Bangladesh are in dire need of such curriculum which will be learner-centered and which will juxtapose knowledge, skill and morality for producing skilled human resources. Tertiary education plays a vital role in developing the future generation of a country and inculcating moral, humanitarian, cultural, social values and promoting students' knowledge and skills. English language skills can prepare them for the socio-economic development of a nation. If we look at our university English education and curriculum, it seems that the present English curriculum has not been properly designed to attain this goal and so "the curriculum should be overhauled every now and then."(Alam, 2005). This study will focus on developing a curriculum framework for English curriculum at undergraduate level.

Curriculum is an overall planning of an educational program. Any curriculum is designed

keeping in mind the interest, capability of learners, and global and local needs and perspectives.

Curriculum incorporates issues like what to teach, whom to teach, how to teach, with what to teach, who will teach and their qualification, where and how long to teach, and how to evaluate. Curriculum theorists do share a common concern and that is a curriculum should be able 'to promote those skills, competencies, understandings and values which will enable him to grow and prosper'(Ornstein &Hunkins, 2017).Components of a curriculum include aims and objective, learning outcome, content, teaching-learning activity, and evaluation guideline. Textbooks are written in accordance with curriculum. All the activities and development in education sector follow the curriculum. So, curriculum is the blue print of any educational system and it needs to be frequently updated to keep pace with fast-changing world. To keep pace with the ever- changing world English curriculum also needs to be overhauled and certain changes should be there

Objective of the Study:

The general objective of this study is to prescribe a learner-centered, skill-based undergraduate English curriculum for Bangladesh based on curriculum theories and relevant other theories which will meet the local and global needs. This study emphasizes upon 4 key elements (objective, course contents, teaching-learning method and evaluation) of curriculum in the prescribed one.

Literature Review:

Haque (2006) in his study has done a needs analysis on academic needs of the students at tertiary level.The study focuses on finding out the amount and level 4 skills of English needed for a meaningful tertiary education and also students' present level of proficiency when they are admitted into university. This study aims at finding out the gap between required level and current level of proficiency in English. This study focuses on academic needs only and not on the needs after completing graduation.

Mamun (2015) conducted a study on designing a needs-based syllabus for tertiary education in Bangladesh by analyzing the target and present situation. The study took into consideration current syllabuses of 8 universities and analyzed those. From chapter outline it is revealed that this study is not job oriented and focuses more on reforming the strategies for developing 4 basic skills.

In Bangladesh, there is a recent study conducted on TESOL program evaluation at tertiary level. Sabrina (2016) conducted a study on evaluation of the TESOL curriculum in Bangladesh from students' perspective. It shows the overall idea about TESOL, present state of TESOL program at selected universities based on students' feedback. Mixed method has been used. Data has been collected from MA ELT/TESOL students from five universities. The respondents are satisfied with the program and said that it is a very useful program for teachers of English. Findings show that curriculum is not up to the mark and respondents expected more emphasis on TESOL in the curriculum. They are hopeful about getting a good job after completing their course.

If there is lack of management in ELT program implementation, students are the worst sufferer which is found in a study. Yulia (2014) conducted a study on 12 selected schools in Indonesia which aimed at evaluating ELT programs in junior high schools. It was found that the decentralization in education created challenges for school authority and individual student. Teachers' limited capacity in teaching was a major finding. A lack of systematic

implementation of ELT program and inadequate facilities in school were found.

Concept of postmodern curriculum is quite new in the arena of curriculum studies. Diana Cheng- Man Lau (2001) have analyzed curriculum development process by using three models i.e. the modern model, the postmodern model and the model suggested by the actor-network theory. They describe curriculum as “the manifestation of the power distribution in society.” They say that curriculum development should be perceived as a network, the nature of which is always changing. This article shows the relationship between curriculum and social context. It is showed that modernist curriculum model takes away the power from teachers and students. Power lies with financially rich people and those who are politically rich. Their power is massive and they can have their influence on education and curriculum design. Government officials and rich people ultimately become curriculum planner. “Power does not reside with the less powerful i.e. teachers and students.” On the other hand, postmodern curriculum model creates increased empowerment. This model shows that teachers and learners can develop their own curriculum through continuous interaction. Thus postmodern curriculum shows that power needs to be redistributed from the planners at the top to the teachers and students at the bottom. The actor- network theory is a postmodernist model for analyzing curriculum in any context. It argues that power is a relational effect and it is not located in a fixed position but is changeable.

From above review it is found that no study yet done in Bangladesh context which figures out a model curriculum for undergraduate English program based on curriculum theories and social needs. So, there is an obvious research gap. This study is undertaken to bridge the gap.

Needs Analysis/ Situation Analysis

A leading educationist has mentioned 10 major problems of higher education in Bangladesh and one is that it has no specific direction and does not have link with professional field (Haque, 1984). Another noted educationist emphatically says that our higher education has no specific goal, not job oriented and our students study without having a target to achieve and consequently they study just to have a certificate (Mian, 2012). The more a curriculum is linked with society and industry, the better. Moreover, to what extent our curriculum follows curriculum theories is a matter to take into account. Is there any mismatch between our curriculum development procedure and curriculum theories?

The present undergraduate curriculum is not focusing on the development of four skills and soft skills which are highly needed for a better job. Listening skill and speaking skills are being neglected in higher level education. Today’s English graduates are good at writing but lack presentation skill and inter-personal skill which is a matter of regret. Our English curriculum needs a thorough investigation and a reformed curriculum is a necessity. Without having sound knowledge of English language our first –year honours students are faced with ‘heavy dose of literature in the syllabus’ which in most cases may create panic about the language (Alam, 2005). It seems our curriculum is developed without much planning and without following curriculum theories. Even ELT stream students are not fully capable of having full command over 4 skills after their graduation. ‘It appears to me that students graduating from the language stream have no more mastery over the English language.’ (Alam, 2005). There is a big question regarding the English language proficiency promoted by present the present curriculum.

Unemployment is a serious threat to a developing country like Bangladesh. The rate of unemployment is much higher among university graduates. A British Council sponsored report on graduate unemployment in South Asia, published earlier this year has generated a media storm in Bangladesh ranking Bangladesh above India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Nepal in terms

of employability of local graduates. As per estimates presented in the report, nearly 5 out of every 10 graduates in Bangladesh are unemployed (against 3 out of 10 in India and Pakistan). The report partly attributes graduate unemployment problem to the region's fast expanding but poor quality private education sector and use of outdated curriculum in public universities (Star, 2014). Graduate unemployment rate in Bangladesh is comparatively higher in Bangladesh which is apparent in a study of 2014. FBCCI President said that in Bangladesh 90 percent of the highly educated are from general education, not from technical education and this creates unemployment (Campus, 2017). Student focused and skill-based curriculum is appropriate for today's highly competitive globalized world. Curriculum needs to be designed in such a way that it fulfills the demand of employers as well as learners. Keeping that in mind, best institutions employ teachers in curriculum planning and development and keep updating their curriculum (Rahman, 2017). The problem of militancy and drug addiction are burning issues worldwide and in a write-up concern has been expressed regarding a rise of militancy due to unemployment and frustration among jobless graduates (Dutt, 2017). Therefore, a renewed curriculum of English is a dire necessity which will fulfill the current needs of learners and employers.

United Nations is working currently to materialize Sustainable development Goals (SDG) with its 193 member countries and it has 17 "Global Goals" with 169 targets. Governments, businesses and civil society together with the United Nations have started to mobilize efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Agenda by 2030 (UN, 2017). In 4.7 section of SDG it is stated that "By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development (UN, 2017)." But there lies a big challenge for us to materialize educational goals of SDG (SDG-4) as our existing curriculum is not updated regularly and most of our teaching-learning methods are outdated.

From the above discussion it is evident that the existing course design of undergraduate education in Bangladesh is not society-oriented and it is not fulfilling the job requirement for the graduates fully; consequently, there is serious unemployment problem in Bangladesh among graduates. Marsh (2009) called upon for a multifaceted reform in curriculum which may include even students. Such a reformed curriculum is needed in Bangladesh where learners' view will be taken into consideration first. English curriculum is no exception as it is mostly literature dominated, so it is not opening up opportunity for graduates to enter diverse work fields.

An Overview of Curriculum Theories:

Any curriculum should be developed following curriculum theories and models prescribed by renowned educationists and planners. An overview of the leading curriculum theories gives us the idea that curriculum should be learner-centered, it should be developed following some steps, it should be able to meet the demand of society etc. In brief, a curriculum, a blue print of education system, should take into account the learners' needs as well as local and global context. Harold Rugg rightly says, "Curriculum should develop the whole learner and it is learner-centered. Considers students' interests and needs, deals with issues of modern life, enable students to think critically. He initiated problem-solving activities, role playing and independent learning, and believes that curriculum should deal with local, national and international issues" (Ornstein and Hankins, 2009). One of the best known Tyler's theories was introduced in 1949 by Ralph Tyler (1902-1994) in his classic book *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction*.

From this book we get the 4 steps of curriculum development:

1. Selection of aims, goals and objectives
2. Selection of learning experiences and content
3. Organization of learning experiences and
4. Evaluation

Hilda Taba proposed another detailed theory for curriculum development in 1962 which gained much popularity. She believed that teachers teach the curriculum and that is why they should participate in developing it instead of higher authority. Taba's model is also called *grass- roots approach*. There are 7 steps in her model and she termed Tyler model as administrative model.

Taba's 7-step model:

1. Diagnosis of needs
2. Identification of objectives
3. Implementation based on objective
4. Organizing the content by teachers
5. Selecting learning experiences
6. Organizing activities
7. Evaluating the effectiveness of the curriculum (Mia, 2004)

It is evident from the curriculum theories that it is quite necessary to cling to curriculum theories while developing a language curriculum. The steps of curriculum development should be properly followed. Moreover, learners' needs should be kept forefront. Much emphasis should be there on national and global issues.

An overview of Foundations of Education

Education has three basic foundation e.g. social foundation, Philosophical foundation and psychological foundation. Any educational program should take these three factors into consideration. Curriculum planners must study these potential factors before designing curriculum.

Social foundation of education underpins the fact that social needs should be address in educational planning. Likewise, cultural foundation should be taken into account. Curriculum based upon alien culture may result in less acquisition on the part of learners.

Philosopher Pestalozzi, the founder of modern educational method, opines that curriculum planners should identify the needs of the learners and prescribe thereby. He also emphasizes upon skilled teacher who will be able to perceive the needs of the learners. He has also given importance upon reading, writing and arithmetic skill development. He told about real-life experiences in education planning (Bhuiyan, 2013).

Prominent educational psychologists quite blatantly talked about education which has a definite goal. Without specific goals students get demoralized and lethargic (Stateuniversity). Learners get more interest in real objects, not in abstract object. That is why modern teachers use real-life learning materials in class to make teaching-learning more vibrant.

Blooms Taxonomy in Curriculum Design:

Bloom's Taxonomy was developed in 1956 by educational psychologist Dr Benjamin Bloom in order to promote higher forms of thinking in education, Bloom's Taxonomy shows that there are three domains of learning which are cognitive domain (mental skill/knowledge), Affective domain (emotional areas, attitude) and Psychomotor domain (skill

development). A curriculum should take into account all these three domains to be a well-developed curriculum. The existing English curriculum has much emphasis on cognitive domain and Affective domain and least emphasis on psychomotor domain.

Cognitive domain has 6 categories which are observed in English departments of Bangladesh. These 6 categories are: Knowledge, Comprehension, Application, Analysis, Synthesis, and Evaluation

Undergraduate English syllabus mainly focuses on literature and all the above 6 categories are well-maintained in teaching and learning of English. Study of literature develops the humanitarian attitudes of students. So, affective domain is covered in literature study. But skill-development issues are left out here. So, English curriculum needs to emphasize upon skill development. And redesigning the course contents according to Bloom's taxonomy is scientific and pragmatic as well.

The Framework for Future Undergraduate Curriculum:

This researcher has designed a framework for future undergraduate English curriculum for Bangladeshi universities taking into consideration the learners' demand and preference, curriculum theories, foundations of education, Bloom's taxonomy, and contemporary English curriculum. This is a model curriculum.

Objectives:

After completing 4-year BA Honours program in English students will:

- Have a strong mastery over 4 skills of English language. They will have superb proficiency in presentation, public speaking, analysis, reporting
- Equip students with all required professional skill and soft skills needed in the job market both at home and abroad.
- Make students opt for dual major which will enhance his/her career prospect
- Enhances the communication skill and analytical ability of learners.
- Open door to a diverse range of career like banking, ESP professional, media, corporate world, environmental sector, civil service, teaching etc.

Course Contents

4-year BA in English. 40 courses. 126 Credits. Internship Level 1, Term 1 (Duration – 6 months)

Course Code	Course Title	Credit Hour
Eng 101	Basic English Skills	3
Eng 102	Introduction to Computer Studies	3
Eng 103	Bangladesh Studies	Non-Credit
Eng 104	Philosophy and Ethics	3
Eng 105	Pronunciation (Phonetics and Phonology)	3
Eng 106	Logic and Critical Thinking	3
	Total	15 Credit

Level 1, Term 2 (Duration – 6 months)

Course Code	Course Title	Credit Hour
Eng 107	Introduction to Poetry and Drama	3
Eng 108	Literary Theory and Criticism	3
Eng 109	Introduction to Fiction, Non-fiction	3
Eng 110	Critical and Creative Writing	3

Eng 111	Modern Poetry and Novels	3
Eng 112	Bangla Language	Non Credit
Eng 113	French Language I	Non-Credit

Level 2, Term 1(Duration – 6 months)

Course Code	Course Title	Credit Hour
Eng 201	Victorian Literature and Romantic Literature	3
Eng 202	Shakespeare	3
Eng 203	Cultural Studies	3
Eng 204	Contemporary World Literature in Translation	3
Eng 205	20 th Century Literature and Post Colonial	3
Eng 206	Civic Responsibility, Diversity and Ethnicity	Non-Credit
Eng 207	French Language II	Non-Credit
	Total	15

Level 2, Term 2 (Duration – 6 months)

Course Code	Course Title	Credit Hour
Eng 208	Advanced Reading and Writing	3
Eng 209	Public Speaking	3
Eng 210	Media English	3
Eng 211	Business English and Supply Chain management	3
Eng 212	International Business Communication	3
	Total	15

Level 3, Term 1

Course Code	Course Title	Credit Hour
Eng 301	English in the Workplace	3
Eng 302	English for Tourism	3
Eng 303	Interpersonal Communication	3
Eng 304	Advanced Speaking and Listening	3
Eng 305	English for Medical Science, Law and Aircraft	3
	Total	15

Level 3, Term 2

Course Code	Course Title	Credit Hour
Eng 306	Introduction to Linguistics	3
Eng 307	Sociolinguistics and Morphology	3
Eng 308	Syntax, Semantics and Pragmatics	3
Eng 309	Psycholinguistics and Discourse Analysis	3
Eng 310	ELT: Theory and Practice	3

Level 4, Term 1

Course Code	Course Content	Credit Hour
Eng 401	Banking and Insurance Basics	3
Eng 402	Journalism: Theory and Practice	3
Eng 403	Negotiation and Conflict management	3

Eng 404	Curriculum, Syllabus and Materials Design and Evaluation	3
Eng 405	Principles of Marketing, Management and Accounting	3

Level 4, Term 2

Course Code	Course Title	Credit Hour
Eng 406	Research Methodology	3
Eng 407	Open Elective/Duel Major I	3
Eng 408	Open Elective/Duel Major II	3
Eng 409	Open Elective/Duel Major III	3
Eng 410	Open Elective/Duel Major IV	3

Internship/ Disertation—6 Credits

There will be scope to choose from the fields of Accounting, Marketing, Environment Science, Management, Social Development, Film Studies, Tourism Management, Human Resource Management, ELT etc for duel major. Students can take upto 4 courses from any of the above mentioned fields or they can take open electives

Teaching Methodology:

‘Learning by doing’ will be the motto of the department where teachers will use multimedia for teaching. Classes will be student-centered instead of teacher-centered class. In interactive class there will be less Teachers’ Talking Time (TTT). Students will be inspired to use internet more and more for learning purpose. Traditional hand outs and ready-made notes will be banned in the department. Searching previous questions and notes from senior students will be discouraged. There will be innovation in question setting pattern where students will need to apply creativity and analytical power to answer, unlike traditional recalling method. Teachers’ role will be as only facilitator and students’ maximum participation should be ensured. Every class will be equipped with computer and broad-band net connection. It will be better if the department can arrange wi-fi. Every attempt should be taken to discourage learners from memorization, rather students will find interest in learning and he/she can relate learning to real life situation.

English will be the only medium of communication inside the class and outside the class. Teachers should be trained to use real-life objects in class room. Case study based questions should be set in the examinations so that students get in touch with real-life problem solving mechanism. Steps should be taken to abolish ‘photocopy culture’ which is very common among university students. Nation and Maclister (2010) have mentioned 20 principles of language teaching and motivation is one of them. Teachers one of the prime roles is to motivate learners

Evaluation:

One mid-term and one final examination will be given and students having less than 75% attendance will not be allowed to sit for final examination .Each full unit 3 credit course will be of 100 marks. The break- down of marks is given below for a 3 credit course:

Semester-end final examination -----	50
Attendance and class participation -----	10
Presentation -----	10
Mid Term -----	10
Assignment -----	20
In Total -----	100 Marks

Grading: University grading norms will be applied.

Discussion:

The proposed English curriculum presented above takes into consideration one basic thing: to make qualified and skilled human resources for job market. Instead of a traditional literature-focussed curriculum, this curriculum puts emphasis on communication skill, foreign language skill, dual major option, mastery over a variety of highly sought-after courses and morality development. It has taken into consideration the issue of keeping students busy in various activities and problem-solving tasks. It will enhance their analytical ability and thinking capacity which are highly valued in today's job market.

Conclusion:

Many factors work behind the improvement of education in a country, but curriculum remains at the center of education system. A better curriculum can lead a country to a better future. Curriculum is basically for learners, not for bureaucrats. If policy makers, academics, experts, teachers and students are aware of the need for a revised English curriculum and are able to detect the drawbacks of existing curriculum, they will try together for a massive change. Findings of this study will act as a catalyst for the policy makers and academics to take initiative for introducing and implementing a revised English curriculum. The proposed curriculum will be able to enhance the potentiality of English graduates in the competitive job market as it is developed upon curriculum theories and it has followed foundations of education. This curriculum Keepsin mind the demand of today's graduates, stakeholders and global need. The researcher is hopeful that the findings of the study will be helpful to the curriculum planners and policy makers.

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