



RESEARCH ARTICLE

ROLE OF ENGLISH NEWSPAPERS IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING AT SECONDARY LEVEL OF EDUCATION IN BANGLADESH: LEARNER PERCEPTION

Nuzaira Tarannum¹, Most. Farhana Jannat² and Khadija Akter Onee³

1. Lecturer, Dept of Mass Communication and Journalism, FSSS, Bangladesh University of Professionals.
2. Assistant Professor, Dept of English, FASS, Bangladesh University of Professionals.
3. Teaching Assistant, Dept of English, FASS, Bangladesh University of Professionals.

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Abstract

The present paper endeavors to explore the strengths and opportunities of English newspapers in English language learning at secondary level in Bangladesh. Through surveying and interviewing students from 9 non-government High schools of Bangladesh, the aim of the research has been attempted to reach. The findings of the study disclose that most of the students are not habituated to reading English newspapers and majority of them lack proficiency in using grammar and vocabulary properly. The study suggests various ways of incorporating English newspapers to improve English skills of the students.

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Introduction:-

Newspapers are known as an immense source of learning language. It provides help in learning day to day communicative English language. Learning a second language becomes easier with self-selected recreational reading. In a developing country like Bangladesh, learning an international language like English is necessary for students and youth. Youths are the future leaders of our nation and they should be skilled in four basic skills of English namely listening, speaking, reading and writing. In the development of language learning practice and ability mass media may play a crucial role. It is not possible to spend whole time on reading newspaper but it is possible to spend some time to read newspaper to learn a language. More importantly, reading an English newspaper daily and incorporating it into the curriculum of secondary level English language learning syllabus can be a good way for secondary level students to earn command over the language.

Limitations of the study

This study has tried to explore the strengths, and opportunities of English Newspaper in English language learning among the nine non-government High Schools of Bangladesh and the participants are also from these institutions.

Objectives of the Study:-

This study aims to assess the role of English newspapers in English Language Learning at Secondary Level of Education in Bangladesh. Thus, the objectives of this paper are-

1. To determine the degree of exposure of the student to the English newspaper.
2. To find out the usefulness of English newspaper to learn English Language.
3. To determine the purpose of reading English Newspaper.

Corresponding Author:- Nuzaira Tarannum

Address:- Lecturer, Dept of Mass Communication and Journalism, FSSS, Bangladesh University of Professionals.

Literature Review:-

Damulira & Numba (2013) states that print media is a great source in schools in the teaching and learning of English language as so many students are well-known with the different types of print media like newspapers. Both teachers and students affirm that they read print media for some definite purposes, like to improve their skill in English language. They said this is a supportive medium to learn English. Though in the study material these media are not included but teachers' uses those as a study material and they recommend some of them as a study material.

Cabansag (2011) states that mass media has helped to develop four skills of English namely listening, speaking, reading and writing in Philippines. He also mentioned that it helps to improve vocabulary as well as it develops their communicative skill. Cabrera. L.S. (2018) in another study on Philippines disclosed that in English language learning at large social media takes several strengths or prospects. Even internet base Medias like e-newspapers could be a helpful platform to learn English that provide considerable amount of language input.

Radhika & Rajeswari (2012) affirms that English print media sends ideas and thoughts to a great number of readers. They said to learn a language print media plays a great role. We cannot avoid the impacts of newspaper to learn English. In general it facilitates both teaching and learning. This cheapest reading material teaches alphabets, how to build sentence structure, grammar, and creative writing etc. English newspapers help to learn new vocabularies that help to learn English Language. They also suggested providing English Newspapers in the leisure period to the students. That will help to learn English Language as well.

Ali & Devi (2013) mentioned that besides teaching from textbooks and magazines it is difficult to manage newspapers. They also said that for effective English language speaking and writing English newspapers can play a vital role as it helps to develop vocabulary, synonyms, antonyms, homonyms, homophones and homographs.

Bala (n.d) states that teaching methods are old and outdated. Teachers usually use textbooks for teaching which are not always interesting. She has mentioned that English Newspaper may help students in Learning English Language. But teachers are not using this media in the classrooms.

Mittat (2014) states that to learn a language newspaper plays an important role. It helps to develop different skills of English. For nonnative speakers it is very difficult to learn English as it is challenging and takes more time to learn. She said that it is important to develop a habit of reading English newspaper. Till now students are not habituated with it.

From the above literature review it is clear that English newspapers help to learn English but it is difficult to keep or use newspapers in the classes. Even students are not habituated with it.

Research Methodology:-

A number of factors were considered in choosing the research design of this study. Survey questionnaire is used as a major instrument and an observation guide as research techniques. Main features that formed the entire questionnaire were supported by literature review. The researchers applied for the permission from the selected school authorities to administer the questionnaires among the students. Data have been collected from nine non-government High Schools of Dhaka city in Bangladesh. The population in this research included students of higher secondary level of Dhaka city in Bangladesh. The sample of this study included eighty nine students. They have participated in this questionnaire survey. The data in this study were collected through a written format. The researchers contacted the participants through email and written from and they submitted the answers in a week or two to the researcher in a written form. As the initial step in analyzing the data for this study, the researchers read through all the information gathered from the completed questionnaires. As the researchers belong to the same professional group and have a similar background as those of the participants, we hold an insider understands of the participants' beliefs and perceptions. Researchers teaching experience in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) setting was valuable in perceiving and interpreting the significance of the data obtained in the questionnaire.

A test of English language competence was used to determine level of understanding English language of student participants. The test consisted of two sections, test of vocabulary and test of sentence structure. Each section consisted of one question with 5 parts. Questions were constructed from newspaper articles. The researchers selectively included day to day communicative English written in newspaper in the questions.

Respondents of the study**Table 1:-** Distribution of respondents.

Name of the School	No of Participants	Total
Dhaka Cantonment Board AdarshaBiddyaNiketon	3	89
National Ideal High School	10	
Viqqrunnisa Noon School	8	
MirpurCant't Public School and College	6	
BAF Shaheen College Kurmitola	5	
Dhaka Cant' Girls' Public School and College	10	
ShaidBirUttamLiutenantAnwar Girls College	4	
National Initial School	26	
Badda Girls High School and Technical College	17	

Figure 1: Distribution of respondents**Presentation of Findings****Student Item 1- Reading English newspaper**

Do you read English Newspaper?

Regularly	Sometimes	Never
9	23	57

Figure 1:- Reading English newspaper.

10.11% students responded that they read English Newspaper regularly, 26% students responded that they read English Newspaper Sometimes. Whereas, 64% of students responded Never.

Student Item 2- Name of the Newspaper

Write down the name of the newspaper(s) that you read [Skip this question if you answered c. Never in question no 1]

The Daily Star	18
The Bangladesh Today	9
Daily Sun	5
Other (mention if any)	0

Figure 2:- Name of the Newspaper.

56.25% students replied they read The Daily Star, 28.13% students replied they read The Bangladesh Today, 15.63% students replied they read Daily Sun and no one mentioned any other newspaper's name.

Student Item 3- Word Meaning

Read the passage given below and find out the meaning of the underlined words. Write down the answer in the given table. Government officials say it has been the country's policy since months after August 25, 2017, while some call it policy shift due to recent incidents. Against the backdrop of many incidents, especially the much-talked about August 25 rally, the government has hardened its stand on Rohingyas and decided to fully enforce an earlier decision not to allow any more of them into the country, senior government and Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) officials told Dhaka Tribune. As there is "no crisis" in Rakhine now, Rohingyas do not need to come to Bangladesh, they said. The persecuted people were allowed in for first several months after August 25, 2017 on humanitarian grounds, said the officials, adding that situation in Rakhine is nowhere close to the happenings of that time. Two

government officials, however, told this correspondent that this seems to be a shift in the government's policy on the heels of the August 25 rally and some violent incidents involving Rohingyas. "Now we find that having sheltered them for two years and looked after them, they (Rohingyas) create manifold problems for us.

Occurrences, Power, Implement, Device, Reporter, Protected, Fierce, Diverse, Event

Selected Word	Correct Meaning	Incorrect Meaning
Incidents	34	55
Enforce		
Correspondent		
Violent		
Sheltered		

Figure 3:- Word Meaning.

38.20% students identified the correct word meaning. Whereas, 61.80% students identified the incorrect word meaning.

Student Item 4:- Identifying correct sentence.

Sentences	Correct Sentence	Incorrect Sentence
a. There is no doubt that the UN has no quite lived up to our expectations b. Home Minister yesterday urged parents keep an eye in their children's activities keep them getting involved in teen gangs. c. The victim claimed that she does not name Khairul backlash fearing. d. A mobile court sentenced a fake doctor two months imprisonment yesterday e. The body language of the Bangladeshi cricketer also looked poor and the bowlers kept down loose deliveries.	13	76

Figure 4:- Identifying correct sentence.

15.12 % students identified the correct sentence and 85.39% could not find out the correct sentence.

Student Item 5-Purpose of reading English newspaper

a. To increase your English Language Skills	6
b. To get information	1
c. Influenced by others (Parents, siblings, Teachers etc.)	3
d. All	22
e. Other	0

Figure 5:- Purpose of reading newspaper.

68.75% students said they read English newspaper to increase their English Language Skills, 3.13% students said they read English newspaper to get information, 9.38% students said they read English newspaper because they are influenced by others, 68.75% said they read English newspaper for All and no one responded Other.

Recommendations:-

On the basis of the analysis of the data and findings, some recommendations are put forward:

1. Students can be assigned tasks related to newspaper reading both as classroom activities and as exercises to be completed at home. Then gradually, when students will start growing interest, a less prescriptive and more autonomous approach in learning English from newspaper can be developed.
2. As subconscious learning is more effective in case of language learning, newspaper can be used to learn English subconsciously while enjoying the contents.
3. As there are individual variations in the interests of students, they can be presented with articles of their choice. It is not possible to tailor textbook materials according to individual interests of students. But, by using newspaper as a learning material, students' interests can be addressed.
4. As most students are not habituated to reading English newspapers, articles with more images and interesting contents can be presented to the students to grab their attention and make them engaged.
5. A limitation of the study is not conducting an experimental control group study on the participants with a pre and a post test. The researchers recommend further study with this methodological approach.

Conclusion:-

The process of language learning is the gradual development of a skill. The more real life exposure and practice can be involved in language learning, the more improved language skills will be. English is a foreign language in Bangladesh but unfortunately it is often treated as just another subject and not as a skill to be improved. That is why, students tend to prefer textbooks, notes and cling to traditional ways of learning English. These results in the failure of improving English language skills in almost all sections such as reading and writing. Most of the students do not nurture the habit of reading English newspapers. However, if newspapers can be frequently presented in the English classes as study material, then positive changes can gradually be attained. Newspapers are easily affordable and available, so, students can easily purchase them. As newspaper contains various kinds of information, students can have a vast content to choose from as per their areas of interests. As most of the classes in Bangladesh are teacher centered, learners' autonomy remains absent. But, by using English newspapers, learners' autonomy and student-centered approach can be promoted. A subconscious and successful development of English grammatical structures and lexicons can be gained by students through using newspaper as a learning material. To cope up with the demands of 21st century, it is important to shift from traditional ways of language learning to more practical and communicative approaches. Reading English newspapers can be an asset for fulfilling this purpose.

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