Humanizing English Language Teaching Pedagogy: A Bangladesh Perspective

Md. Rakibul Islam[1]

Mahbub Alam[2]

Abstract

Bangladesh stands in a limbo where the status of English is in between foreign and second language. Against this backdrop, language policymakers in the country are in a relentless quest to find an appropriate methodology that will better suit its contextual realities. The language teaching instructional models that have been implemented so far for teaching English in Bangladesh are predominantly Eurocentric without much contextualization. The lack of cultural and contextual attunement of those Western pedagogical approaches has created a long-term negative impact on the students here, especially those who are from lower socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. As a result, academic underachievement and English phobia are common issues in Bangladesh that lead students from subordinated classes to a dehumanizing condition. This qualitative paper will attempt to showcase the ineffectiveness of the Eurocentric language teaching instructional models in the context of Bangladesh and suggest an alternative, humanizing pedagogical approach to language teaching.

1. Introduction

As with other contexts of the Global South, the English language is revered in Bangladesh as something divine that has the magical power to uplift the social status of the people of this polity and act as the catalyst to enter the arena of global citizenry. From this utilitarian perspective of language, English has been included as the mandatory subject in the national curriculum from Grade1 to Grade12 since 1991 (Hamid & Erling, 2016). Following Kachru's model (1985), the use of English across the globe can be divided into three circles: 1. The 'Inner Circle' which involves BANA countries—Britain, Australia, New Zealand, USA & Canada—(Holliday, 1994), where English is used as the first language/native tongue. 2. The 'Outer Circle' comprises countries like India, Singapore, Kenya, Nigeria, etc. where English is used as a second language. 3. The 'Expanding Circle' includes countries like China, Brazil, Russia, etc. where English is blooming as a foreign language.

[1]Associate Professor, Department of English, Gopalganj Science and Technology University

[2]Assistant Professor, Department of English, Gopalganj Science and Technology University

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of_English.jpg

There is no concrete status of English in Bangladesh as a foreign or second language, since the constitution of Bangladesh recognizes Bangla as the only state and official language (Ara, 2020). Although English does not have the constitutional recognition as the second or official language, it is taught as a mandatory subject like Bangla from the primary to the tertiary level of education. Therefore, it is puzzling to fix a concrete place for Bangladesh either in the Outer or Expanding Circle of Kachru's Model.

Like other countries of the Outer and Expanding Circles, the language policy and planning of Bangladesh are greatly influenced by the ideology and pedagogical approaches of the BANA (Inner Circle) countries. The English language teaching instructional models that have been implemented in Bangladesh, starting from the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) to the most recently adopted Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), are based on the Western model of foreign language teaching. These Eurocentric pedagogical approaches to language teaching were implemented in Bangladesh without much contextualization. As a result of this copycat adoption of the aforementioned Eurocentric language teaching models, a long-term negative impact is observed among the language learners of Bangladesh, especially those who are from lower socio-economic and cultural backgrounds (Rahman et al., 2019). As a result, they continue to struggle with academic underachievement in English, and English-phobia becomes a perpetual issue for them.

The Government of Bangladesh has taken different English language teaching projects from time to time in association with multiple international

financial agencies and NGOs, especially from BANA countries like Britain and America. These English language teaching programs function at different levels of education, starting from primary to tertiary. Almost all the projects primarily aim at teachers' education. In this regard, a seminal research work by Hamid and Earling (2016) focusing on English education policy and planning in Bangladesh can be brought as a reference. In their research, they have shown that Bangladesh, in the recent past, adopted various English language education policies and planning projects. For instance, the English Language Teaching Improvement Project (ELTIP) was funded by the UK and the Government of Bangladesh and collaboratively implemented by the British Council and the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB), Bangladesh. The span of this project was from 1997 to 2012, intending to train teachers in Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) from secondary schools. This approach was later introduced in the national curriculum. ELTIP failed to succeed not only due to the budget and contextual setbacks but also for the varying interests of its stakeholders. Another project named Teaching Quality Improvement in Secondary Education Project (TQI-SEP), financed by the Asian Development Bank, Canada, and the Government of Bangladesh and materialized by the Ministry of Education (MoE) from 2005 to 2011, was also in action simultaneously with ELTIP. The project was undertaken to train a large number of teachers (28,000) in secondary education. It also failed to bring a tangible outcome because of financial constraints. Another similar kind of initiative was taken by the British Council called English for teaching, teaching for English (ETTE) in 2008, concentrating on improving primary teachers' English and pedagogical skills. Again, this project achieved limited success. The projects discussed above had ambitious goals but could only afford to achieve scant success. Therefore, another long-term project, English in Action (EIA), was launched, which operated from 2008 to 2017 and was funded by DfID (the UK's Department for International Development) with a view to training 100,000 teachers across the country. The aim of these school-based programmes in EIA was to improve English language learning through the professional development of teachers in communicative language teaching (Hamid & Earling, 2016).

Almost all the projects starting from ELTIP to EIA had the common goal, which was to improve the English language teaching and learning scenario in Bangladesh. Sad but true, these high-sounding projects, despite having a strong theoretical framework, were more or less unsuccessful because of the contextual inappropriateness. The similar story of the failure of these projects can be identified in other Asian contexts, such as those of Japan, Korea, China, and Taiwan, where researchers have suggested reviewing the policies of ELT to make these more culture- and context-sensitive Qi (2009). From a close analysis of these projects, it can be found that the prime aim of these projects was to train the teachers following

Eurocentric pedagogical models such as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). CLT was designed based on Western pedagogical philosophy and meant to be implemented in the ESL contexts where the learners get more exposure to English inside and outside the classroom. The fundamental motto of CLT was to develop the Communicative Competence (Hymes, 1985) of the learners so that they could be able to interact with other interlocutors in actual situations. In Bangladesh, English is used mainly as a foreign language and has very limited scope to use it pragmatically. Through these projects, CLT was introduced in Bangladesh in the mid-nineties of the last century, aiming to develop learners' communicative skills. Implementation of a western language teaching approach in a non-western context like Bangladesh had a catastrophic impact on the learners, as the educational philosophy, life experience, and value system of the learners and teachers of Bangladesh are in utter contrast with those of the originating countries of CLT. Before the introduction of CLT, Classical Method of teaching English was followed in the country where students mainly learned the structures of language first, and after mastering the forms of language, they were instructed to translate the sentences from the mother tongue to the target language and vice versa. After the introduction of CLT in the national curriculum, the whole learning procedure moved upside down; that is, structure-based learning turned into communication-based learning, which brought a cultural shock for both the learners and teachers of this part of the world. This abrupt paradigm shift from a structure-based instructional model of English language teaching to a communication-based one resulted in a complete deterioration of the standard of English language pedagogy in the country as opposed to what it promised to create a conjuring effect earlier (Huda, 2013).To address the decline in English education in Bangladesh, education policymakers are in a relentless quest to develop a feasible approach to English language teaching year after year. In spite of the recurrent modifications in the curriculum, materials, and instructional models of teaching English, the condition of the learners remains stagnant, especially those from the socially, economically, and culturally marginalized class. The concerned authority considers this disappointing performance in English as a technical issue that needs to be rectified by creating advanced pedagogical models. For this purpose, they are in a continuous process of taking recourse to the Western teaching approaches, which are evident in the recent curricular reforms of the country. Being too obsessed with the technicality of instruction, they often ignore a very common but crucial perspective of education, which is the humanistic side of pedagogy. When we talk about the academic underachievement of the minority class of society, it would be unjust to overlook the historical and socio-cultural milieu that shapes their lives. If we go through a historical analysis of the experience of learners belonging to the underprivileged groups of society, a very vivid picture of institutional oppression will be projected. This group of learners has been historically oppressed living in a

society where unequal power relations prevail since educational institutes are the microcosms of society. So, the injustice and maltreatment that hover in society will, undoubtedly, be reflected in its institutions. Bangladesh, as a former British colony, has the imprint of colonialism in its institutions. The country, after fifty-three years of independence, is still carrying a colonial legacy in its education system. These colonially-moulded educational institutions have historically viewed the students from underprivileged backgrounds as having cognitive deficiencies because of their humble socio-economic upbringing. Therefore, any discussion about the linguistic development of this group of learners would be incomplete without considering their socio-economic backgrounds. But the current research in academia focuses too much on the impairments of these learners in acquiring or learning English as a second or foreign language and tends to prioritize the innovation of a magical instructional model that will overnight change the perpetual deficiency of this group of learners. This tendency to rely more on technical issues of pedagogy overshadows the root cause of this problem: the unequal power relations of the society, the undemocratic treatment of the institutions, and excessive dependence on Eurocentric top-down pedagogical approaches. This theoretical paper will explore the inappropriateness of Western pedagogical approaches in a quasi-colonial, undemocratic institutional setting in Bangladesh where disproportionate power relations thrive and subsequently propose an alternative to the existing method-based pedagogy, namely humanistic pedagogy.

2. Literature review

The theoretical framework of this paper has been adapted from a scholarly article titled "Beyond the Methods Fetish:Toward a Humanizing Pedagogy" by Bartolome (1994). In this article, Bartolome highlights the academic underachievement of the minority students of Mexican origin in the United States' universities, especially in English language courses. Here, she argues that too much reliance on the instructional methods to overcome the underperformance of these students from lower socio-economic and cultural backgrounds camouflages one less visible but more important issue behind this underachievement: the asymmetrical power relations of society, which by default are reflected in the schools; the deficit view of minority students, about which the school authority is uncritical; and the historical oppressive treatment of the colonially-moulded schools towards these minority learners, which has confined them to a dehumanizing state. To provide a probable solution to this underachievement, she proposes a humanizing pedagogy that will equalize the unequal power relations among the stakeholders in the schools by making it a true cultural democratic site and providing equal treatment to all the learners irrespective of their social and economic backgrounds. She also focuses on the necessity of teachers' political clarity to ensure a humanizing approach towards

pedagogy, because uncritical teachers will not be able to trace the underlying injustice and malpractice in the institutions and therefore, fail to minimize the prevailing class struggle that essentially acts as a hindrance to ensuring a congenial teaching and learning atmosphere. At last, she puts forward two promising teaching approaches (as a framework of humanizing pedagogy) that have the potential to equalize the power relations in the classroom: 1.Culturally Responsive Education, and 2.Strategic Teaching.

Secondly, another academic paper has been reviewed titled "English-in-Education Policy and Planning in Bangladesh: A Critical Examination" by Hamid and Erling (2016), where the authors have illustrated the English-language educational policy and planning, its implementation, and outcomes in Bangladesh so far. They have discussed the role of different national and international financial agencies in the actualization of those English Language Policy and Planning Projects and their success and failure. They further postulate that the language policy and planning of a developing country like Bangladesh should blend the global and local realities, prioritizing the local socio-economic and cultural variables. Moreover, they stress the need for language ecology because, although Bangladesh is a monolingual country, it has around 36 minority groups who have their own languages (both indigenous and non-indigenous).

In the third place, a critical writing titled "Transforming lives: introducing critical pedagogy into ELT classrooms" by Akbari (2007) is also analyzed. Here the writer points out, echoing Bartolome(1994), that the injustice and discrimination rooted in society based on race, social class, or gender are reproduced in the institutions. He defines critical pedagogy as the pedagogy of hope and human liberation. Emphasizing Freire (1970), he considers education, to be precise, language teaching, as a political enterprise where the role of a critical teacher is of utmost importance. According to Akbari, the traditional pedagogy fulfills the expectations of the privileged class of society by integrating their aspirations and life experience in the curriculum and materials, where the real-life problems and struggles of the socially marginalized class are systematically denied. At last, he recommends three suggestions in order to transform the English language classrooms into more critical settings: 1. utilizing learners L1 as the resource; 2. incorporating more local cultural elements in the materials; and 3. making learners conscious of the problems encountered by the marginalized groups.

Fourthly, a seminal research work named "Transformation of Applied Linguistics in the Global South Context of Bangladesh: Researcher Agency, Imagination, and North-South Cooperation" by Hamid, Sultana, and Roshid (2024) has also been investigated, where the authors emphasize the importance of

decolonizing the Global North-based knowledge and theories of English language teaching and making them compatible with the contextual realities of the Global South through providing the agency to the local researchers.

As mentioned earlier, the theoretical foundation of this research work has been developed from the critical academic research of Bartolome. The enterprise initiated by Bartolome covers the American context, where she unfolds the deep-rooted cause of the underperformance of the learners from ethnic minority or socially and culturally marginalized classes in English language courses in American universities. We will replicate the idea of Bartolome in the Bangladeshi context, where students from lower socio-economic and cultural backgrounds also undergo the identical situation, as there is a strong tendency of academic underperformance in English language courses among the students. But the contextual reality of Bangladesh is just the opposite side of the coin, as the majority of the students here are from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Bangladesh is a developing country in South Asia where 18.7% (Asian Development Bank, 2022) of the population live below the poverty line. According to the website of the United Nations Development Programme (2024), it is evident that Bangladesh's Human Development Index value for 2022 is 0.67, which places the country at 134 among 204 countries in the world. Education survey of Bangladesh 2022 shows that 53.78% of the educational institutions are located in rural areas of the country (Bangladesh Education Statistics, 2022). From the statistics shown above, it goes without debate that the majority portion of the students of Bangladesh are from rural areas where the amenities for education are too scanty due to the financial and infrastructural limitations. Most of the students from the rural areas are from poverty-ridden families. These people are in perpetual struggle to secure their daily livelihood. Consequently, this struggle for subsistence has a deep-rooted impact on their academic performance. So, from the above discussion, a conclusion can be drawn that the larger part of the students of the country are from lower socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. Moreover, these people have a long history of colonial oppression, as Bangladesh was under colonial rule for a long period of time and her education system is grounded in British colonial mould.

Where Bartolome's research was applicable for a minority portion of students' underachievement in an American context, our paper will focus on the underperformance of students in English language courses from lower socio-economic status who are majority in the Bangladeshi case. We will try to project that this underperformance in English is not for technical reasons; rather, it is due to the unequal power relations in the institutions, the deficit view about these students, and historical oppressive treatment towards them by the quasi-colonial institutions that ultimately lead them to a dehumanizing condition. At last, we will

propose an alternative humanizing pedagogical model that will minimize the disproportionate power relations in the institutions and make them true democratic sites where learners from all economic, social, and cultural classes will receive equal treatment, and eventually, they will be able to participate in the teaching and learning environment spontaneously with the help of the politically clear teachers.

3. The current landscape of teaching English in Bangladesh

English was introduced as a mandatory subject from Grade 1 to the tertiary level in 1992 in Bangladesh (Rasheed, 2013). The Grammar Translation Method (GTM) or the Classical Method was predominantly followed to teach English since the birth of the nation in 1971.The GTM originated in Europe to teach Greek and Latin languages (Larsen & Freeman, 2000). This method is also called the classical method of language teaching because it was used to teach classical languages like Greek and Latin. Later, in the 20th century, this method was widely used around the globe to teach foreign languages, where the main goal of learning a foreign language was to be able to read and appreciate the literature of the target language (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). The key teaching technique of GTM is to teach the learners the necessary grammatical rules and vocabulary of the target language, and after mastery of the structures of the target language, the learners are taught the techniques to translate the literary texts from the target language to the native language and vice versa. In GTM, only the reading and writing skills are prioritized, whereas oral skills are ignored. Due to the excessive focus on structure-based learning, GTM has a conspicuous limitation: it is inappropriate to develop learners' communicative skills. Dissatisfied with the ineffectiveness of the GTM, the language policy makers in Bangladesh shifted their focus from the structure-based approach of English language teaching to a more communication-based approach. As a result of this, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) was introduced in Bangladesh in 1996 (Kabir, 2023). Like the GTM, CLT also emerged from the European contexts in the late seventies and early eighties, aiming to develop learners' communicative competence (Hymes, 1966; Chomsky, 1965; Canale & Swain, 1980; Celce-Murcia, Dornyei & Thurrell, 1995). However, Communicative Language Teaching came into the classroom in Bangladesh with the introduction of two text books at the secondary level (English for Today) in 2001 and the higher secondary level (English for Today) in 2002, respectively (Alam et al., 2014).

From the history of English language teaching pedagogy in Bangladesh, it is clearly visible that the approaches that have been adopted for teaching English in the country are completely Eurocentric by nature. Eurocentric pedagogical approaches are based on a common principle: top-down, or, to quote Freire (1970), grounded on the Banking Model of Education, where teachers are seen as the sole

depositors of knowledge and students are passive receivers. Here, education is perceived as a unidirectional enterprise of transmission of knowledge from teacher to student. According to Freire, this one-way dissemination of knowledge makes the learners object and the teacher subject in the teaching and learning context. Eventually, the learners fail to develop critical ability to challenge the legitimacy of the knowledge provided by the teacher, which ultimately leads them to succumb to the oppressive treatment of the institutions perennially.

Coming to the Bangladeshi context, the copycat adoption of the Eurocentric pedagogical approaches has created a long-term negative impact on the learners. As mentioned earlier, most of the students of Bangladesh come from lower socio-economic and cultural backgrounds where societal injustice and maltreatment are an everyday issue (Hamid et al.,2009). When they step into the educational arena, they receive the same treatment from the institutions as the educational institutions in Bangladesh are yet to be decolonized. It is a common sight in Bangladesh that students from backward classes are historically underserved in the institutions, as the education system of Bangladesh is discriminatory from the very inception. The education system of Bangladesh is divided into three streams: a) English medium, where students from the elite and upper-middle classes are typically enrolled, which follows British and American curricula; b) Bangla medium, where pupils from the middle and lower-middle classes seek their education that follows the NTCB (National Curriculum and Textbook Board) curriculum, where Bangla is the medium of instruction and c) Madrasah education which is predominantly a religious mode of education where the populace from socially marginalized class take resort (Hamid & Erling, 2016). This division of the education system has a deep-rooted colonial backdrop due to the divide-and-rule policy in education originated from the British educationalist Thomas Babington Macaulay's Minute on Indian Education in 1835, where he emphasized the use of English as the medium of instruction in education and launched the Eurocentric modern education in the Indian subcontinent. He was disdainful about Indian local knowledge and language and considered them to be less valuable. Bangladesh, as part of the former Indian subcontinent, inherited this colonially-moulded schooling system from the British rule, where unequal power relations, injustice, and oppressive treatment toward the students from humble backgrounds are fostered. The pedagogical approaches that are followed in these institutions to teach English are all borrowed from the West without proper appropriation and contextualization, which are designed to fulfill the aspirations of the elite and upper-middle class of society, where the living experience and struggle of the lower class is politically avoided (Gray, 2001). Falling into the intricate labyrinth of this unjust class structure, students from the socially and culturally marginalized group grope in the dark to find their identity. As a result of this

discriminatory and biased attitude of the institutions, they are ostracized in the teaching and learning environment, which ultimately takes them to a state of demotivation. Consequently, they underperform in the examinations over and over again. According to Bartolome (1994), the researchers are considering the cause of this underachievement of the minority students as a technical issue, keeping aside the prime reason behind this problem. They are emphasizing innovating what Maria de la Luz Reyes (1992) says—a "one size fits all" instructional method that will act as a remedy for the underperformance of the marginalized class beyond cultural and contextual boundaries.

Furthermore, Bartolome also opines that these quasi-colonial institutions carry an archetypal deficit view about these socially conceived low-status students. This deficit view is related to the class discrimination and disproportionate power relations of the society. The elite class that holds the power considers the populace from the socially and economically deprived class as having congenital deficiency in their cognitive ability, which further impacts their academic performance. This deficit view about the learners from subordinated class is also applicable in the Bangladeshi context, as the societal system is grounded in unequal power relations and the educational institutions carry a long colonial legacy. Here, the learners from lower socio-economic backgrounds, especially those who come from rural areas and get enrolled in the urban institutions, face the same discriminatory treatment from the stakeholders (governing bodies, teachers, and fellow students) of the institutions due to this stereotypical deficit view that results in poor motivation, low self-esteem, and cognitive and linguistic deficiencies (Valencia, 1986). This systematic injustice and poor treatment toward the so-called low-status students by the institutions make them cornered, which ultimately leads these pupils to a dehumanizing state. To get rid of this problem, we should question the legitimacy of the existing pedagogical approaches, which nurture the unequal power relations in society, creates class discrimination, and contains a socially constructed deficit view at its heart.

4. Limitations of current pedagogical approaches

From a critical dissection of the fundamental principles of Eurocentric pedagogical approaches, we can draw a vivid image of the reductionist view of knowledge: these phony instructional models of teaching foreign languages disregard learners' previous linguistic and cultural knowledge by projecting them as inferior. For instance, these approaches prohibit the use of the learner's mother tongue in the classroom as the L1 would interfere in the way of successful acquisition of the target language (Islam & Akteruzzaman, 2016). It goes on creating fallacious narratives like unlearning the previous linguistic structures, assuming a new

identity in the foreign language classrooms, and rectifying errors strictly as errors would form bad habits that would further set impediments in the learning process (Singh, 2017). Whereas critical pedagogues are suggesting utilizing learners' mother tongue as a resource, most of the traditional Western approaches discourage the use of mother tongue. Prominent second language learning theorists, such as Krashen and Terrell (1983) postulate that second language learning happens in natural order: language learning is a spontaneous process where learners pick up certain linguistic input of the target language earlier and then continue to acquire the other ones, or, in other words, they learn the easiest structures first and the complex ones later, where the former creates the space for the latter. In another hypothesis named the input hypothesis, Krashen (1977) emphasizes utilizing the learner's previous knowledge as the basis for learning the second language by coining the mathematical equation i+1, where i stands for the learner's present level of knowledge and 1 stands for the latest input. According to him, successful learning takes place only when the input is one step ahead of the learner's prior knowledge. Likewise, Halliday's (1967) account of information structure in discourse can shed further light on the current argument. He posits that information is structured in a sequence of 'given+new' within a discourse where given or old information precedes the new one. Piaget (1953) also puts forward a similar thought in his Cognitive Theory of Language Acquisition by stressing the learner's schemata as the building block or starting point of learning a particular language.

From the aforementioned arguments, it goes without contradiction that there is no point in denying learners' background knowledge in the process of learning a foreign or second language. As mentioned earlier, the majority portion of the Eurocentric pedagogical models ignores learners' indigenous sociolinguistic knowledge by labeling them as unnecessary in the learning process, which is utterly a faulty idea. This ideology of rejecting the learners' socio-cultural background is, without doubt, a political agenda of the West to marginalize the subaltern class of the East by creating a pseudo-reality of the Western supremacy. This Western supremacy is based on asymmetrical power relations between the West and the East (Betik, 2020). To clarify the unequal power dynamics between the East and the West, Foucault's concept of discourse and power is worth mentioning here. In his Discipline and Punish (1977), he mentions: "There is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relation." So, any discussion about an appropriate pedagogy for a particular context would be incomplete without minimizing the underlying unequal power relations that keep the institutions aloof from being a true democratic site and compels the stakeholders to uncritically conform to the status quo. Hence, what is important for Bangladesh is to develop an alternative pedagogical framework to get rid of the dehumanizing

effect of the European instructional approaches that put setbacks in the way of the academic achievement of the students so far.

5. An alternative pedagogical approach/ implementing humanizing pedagogy in Bangladeshi context

As mentioned earlier, the conceptual framework of this academic endeavor has been adapted from Bartolome's scholarly work, where she proposes the concept of humanizing pedagogy as an alternative to the current Eurocentric pedagogical models, which consider the academic underachievement of the socially underprivileged class as a technical issue. Instead, Bartolome regards this as a humanistic issue. She defines humanistic pedagogy as a humanistic approach towards teaching that would have the potential to equalize the asymmetrical power relations of the institutions, challenge the deficit view about minority students, and ensure cultural democracy among the different classes of society. She further mentions that if these conditions are assured, any context- and culture-sensitive language teaching approach can be termed as humanizing pedagogy.

As most of the West-based pedagogical approaches have catastrophically failed to ensure the academic progress in foreign language learning of the backward class learners in Bangladesh, it is high time to reshape the current instructional models to make those more effective by actualizing them from a humanistic perspective where the learners will get equal treatment in the institutes irrespective of their socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. Since the context of Bangladesh is more or less identical to the one that Bartolome has studied, her concept of humanizing pedagogy can shed light of hope here. To implement humanizing pedagogy in the Bangladeshi context, some guidelines can be suggested.

First and foremost, the underlying disproportionate power relations of the academic institutions that make the learners from subordinated classes feel demotivated in the classroom should be equalized. Krashen's (1985) affective filter hypothesis is more pertinent here. According to the affective filter hypothesis, students come into the learning environment with a psychological barrier or learning phobia. This phobia or mental reluctance acts as a filter in the teaching and learning context. For optimum learning to take place, this filter has to be lowered as much as possible. In Bangladesh, there is a strong trace of mismatched power relations between teachers and students in the classroom, as the classrooms are teacher-centered, where teachers hold the absolute power. Teachers are considered the sole depositors of knowledge, and learners are its receivers. As a bitter consequence of this excessive teacher's authority, learners feel less powerful; this powerless state of the learners functions as the affective filter in the learning process.

Moreover, students from all socio-economic backgrounds do not get equal treatment from the institutions. So, at first, these unequal power relations have to be minimized so that learners get equal treatment from the institutions irrespective of their socio-cultural and economic backgrounds. This renewed power dimension between the teachers and the learners will establish cultural democracy in the institutions.

Secondly, the colonially inherited deficit view about the socio-economically subordinated class has to be altered. Here, teachers' political clarity (critical awareness to understand the prevailing injustice in the society) can be a useful tool to challenge the existing power dynamics of the society that pampers the age-old racist ideology (people from one cultural or ethnic group are superior to another) about these marginalized class people. A politically clear teacher can see through the underlying societal prejudice and prevailing injustice in the institutions that put an embargo on the teaching and learning atmosphere and, subsequently, castigate this epistemic maltreatment against the socially underserved class. He/she further can critically analyze the Western political agenda masked in the Eurocentric pedagogical models that were basically designed to isolate the Eastern learners from their native culture and knowledge base. A critical teacher will venture into the socio-cultural analysis of the learners and, instead of blindly following any specific teaching strategy, reorganize that approach to be sensitive to the learners' culture and contextual needs.

Thirdly, the pedagogical framework of Bangladesh has to be localized so that it can better suit the contextual and cultural variables of the country, as the Western pedagogical approaches put more emphasis on the structural properties of language and keep the sociolinguistic factors in a peripheral place. These predominantly European approaches, which are fundamentally developed following a formal view of language, consider language learning as a universal phenomenon where local contextual variables are ignored (Byram and Grundy, 2003). On the contrary, the advocates of post-structuralism consider language as discourse, where the context in which language is used has to be taken into account as language does not exist in a social vacuum. We can find this view in Gee and Handford (2023), while defining discourse, they say "the meanings we give language and the actions we carry out when we use language in specific contexts." Likewise, McCarthy and Carter (1994) mention, "The language we access within the system is transformed into language as discourse." In this regard, the failure of most of the Eurocentric teaching approaches in Bangladesh can be connected. For example, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) failed in Bangladesh because it was developed exclusively for the Western context that was later adopted in Bangladesh without much culture and contextual appropriation. The ineffectiveness of CLT and other West-based language teaching approaches in

Bangladesh can be traced as being more structure-based and less discourse-oriented as these methods or approaches focus mostly on the structural properties of the target language while the contextual aspects of language are less emphasized. As a result, the learners only pick up the language superficially but cannot connect the acquired rules in real-life contexts effectively. To theorize this further, we can go back to Kachru's model again, where most of the language teaching instructional models are designed in the inner circle (BANA countries) but applied in the outer and expanding circles, which creates a mismatch between theory and practice. So, the existing language teaching approaches in Bangladesh have to be localized to make those more humanistic, where the knowledge and living experience of the teachers and learners must be given utmost priority. The policymakers should put more stress on teachers' empowerment because they are one of the important stakeholders who will encounter the actual situation. Here, Kumaravadivelu's (1994) concept of three parameters (1. parameter of particularity, 2. parameter of practicality, and 3. parameter of possibility) of post-method pedagogy can be a useful guideline for teachers' empowerment. According to Kumaravadivelu, an appropriate methodology should be developed in a particular context for a particular teacher teaching a particular group of students; it must have real-life feasibility and have the ability to create a local identity within a global context. Therefore, if the teachers in Bangladesh are given freedom to theorize their own pedagogical approaches based on what they actually practice in the classroom, those models of teaching can be more empirical in nature and can establish a humanistic environment in the pedagogical arena.

Fourthly, the teacher-student relationship in Bangladesh has to be redefined and reconfigured. The current teaching and learning culture in this country is teacher-centered, where students are passive receivers and teachers are the sole providers of knowledge. This asymmetrical role relationship between the teachers and students should be equalized to make the classroom a democratic site. The traditional top-down teacher-student relationship can be replaced with a new T-S rapport, which Gee (1989) calls apprenticeship, where teachers are the persons who have already mastered the discourse area and students are the prospective seekers of that field of knowledge by engaging in a symbiotic relationship that will ensure equal space of knowledge-making for both parties concerned. To substantiate this further, Vygotsky's (1978) socio-cultural theory of cognitive development is worth mentioning. According to Vygotsky, language learning is a social process where children learn the language from their interaction with 'more knowledgeable others.' In this process a more humane and cozy relationship will be formed between the teachers (more knowledgeable others) and learners that will eventually minimize the psychological barriers between them and make the learning environment more congenial and democratic (participatory).

Lastly, adopting Macedo's (1994) concept of anti-methods pedagogy can be related in the context of Bangladesh, where he advocates for an undertaking for the teachers: 1. to challenge the prevalent methods-fetish in the pedagogical sphere, 2. to focus a critical understanding about the theoretical backgrounds of those methods, and 3. to avoid blindly following any instructional models without cultural and contextual appropriation. An anti-method pedagogy is an alternative to traditional instructional models that would critically question the mechanization of intellectualism and put the teachers in a challenging situation to retrieve the lost dignity and humanity of the marginalized class in Bangladeshi ELT landscape.

6. Conclusion

Implementing an appropriate pedagogical framework is quite a challenging task in the Bangladeshi context, as the country has been struggling to concretize a particular language policy because of its societal, cultural, economic, and political constraints. The language policies so far implemented in Bangladesh after the independence are primarily Eurocentric in principle, and most of those could not bring intended outcomes due to a lack of cultural and contextual misappropriation that further resulted in cultural conflicts among the stakeholders. So, it is high time to sternly question the legitimacy of the existing Western-rooted pedagogical approaches in Bangladesh that were designed to foster unequal power relations in the institutions, uphold social injustice, and ostracize the socio-economically subordinated class to a dehumanizing state. Excessive obsession with the existing language teaching instructional methods will not mitigate this lingering underperformance in the English language unless and until the deep-rooted issues behind this academic underachievement are ardently addressed. As a potential solution, the language policy makers of Bangladesh can evaluate the recommended guidelines to bring about a positive change in the domain of language teaching and learning.

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