CONCLUSION

I. Review of Previous Chapters.
CHAPTER 6

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Introduction
The Concluding Chapter of the present study is divided into two parts. The first part presents a review of what has been done in the previous Chapters together with a brief analysis of the performance of the students in the English language test. The second part contains a brief review of the difficulties which young Bengalee students face in learning English as a second language.

6.1 A brief review of previous Chapters
In Chapter-I of this thesis the purpose of the study has been clearly stated – the purpose being to determine the degree of proficiency in English language at the end of the secondary school stage. This Chapter also contains a brief discussion on the state of the arts in second language studies. Major theories on learning have also been referred to. It has been shown that out of a plethora of learning theories have emerged the two most important theories viz. the Cognitive theory and the Behaviouristic theory. While the former regards language as a mental process, the latter lays stress on the mechanical aspect of learning. Experiences show that different students learn differently and hence it is better to regard the two
theories as complementary to each other. This is followed by a brief reference to the EFL/ESL studies done in India. The Chapter also discusses the Policy of the Central Government relating to teaching and learning of English in India, and the place of English in the curriculum of the secondary schools in West Bengal. The Chapter concludes with a description of the organization of the present study.

In the Second Chapter methods of approach relating to the present study have been described. This Chapter describes the survey that was conducted with six hundred students relating to reading in Class-XI in different schools in the rural and urban areas of North 24 Parganas and in Calcutta. Two hundred boys and girls were chosen from Bengali Medium Schools in the rural areas, another group of two hundred were taken from the urban areas and the remaining two hundred were from English Medium Schools. The purpose behind the selection of students from both rural and urban areas is to find out if there is any real difference between the performance of the students of these two different categories of schools and if there is any, in what manner one group differs from another. There cannot be any real comparison between the performance of Bengali Medium Students and that of English Medium Students because the latter's exposure to English is longer than that of the former. However, it is surprising to see that in some of the items in
which tests were conducted, EM students did not fare satisfactorily. This is borne out by the analysis of the results of the tests administered to the students of different categories of schools. Attempts have also been made to determine what role merit plays in the acquisition of a second language. With this end in view a comparative study of the performance of Science and Arts students have been made. Since students, scoring very high marks in Madhyamik (Secondary) or Equivalent examinations are admitted to Science streams, it is quite reasonable to suppose that students admitted to the Science stream are usually more meritorious than those who belong to the Arts stream. The results of the tests show that Science students have fared better than the Arts students.

A sexwise analysis of the performance of the students has also been made. The difference between the performance of boys and that of girls is appears to be greater in case of RBM schools than in case of UBM and EM schools. All this is reflected in Chapter three, four and five.

Chapter-3 contains several tabular pictures of the results of the test in spelling. The overall proficiency acquired by RBM schools is 51.37%, while it is 56.63% in case of UBM students. EM students come ahead of the two with their score of 90.93%.
Chapter-4 deals with inflectional and other grammatical errors. This chapter deals with the performance of Bengali students in as many as twelve items. They are articles, propositions, nouns, adjectives, personal pronouns, tenses, phrasal verbs, verbs, auxiliary verbs, adverbs, parts of speech and the use of number. The performance of both RBM and UBM students in article test is satisfactory since students of both categories of schools have scored around 80%. In preposition test, however, both have fared unsatisfactorily. While RBM students have scored 43.06%, the UBM students have obtained an average proficiency of 43.19%. Students of both RBM and UBM schools have scored more than 60% in the tests in nouns, personal pronouns, tenses and verbs. The difference between the two appears wider when one considers their performance in the tests in adjectives, phrasal verbs, auxiliary verbs and adverbs. Students of both RBM and UBM schools find the use of auxiliary verbs difficult to master. While RBM students have scored 14.7% in this item, the UBM students have obtained 30.4%. Bengali Medium students find it difficult to master the use of auxiliary verbs to frame interrogative and negative sentences. Two other items appear difficult to Bengalee learners. They are the use of prepositions and number.
Chapter 5 deals with syntactic errors. In the test relating to change of speech from Direct to Indirect, students of all categories have fared unsatisfactorily. The overall proficiency acquired by RRM students in this area is 31.93%, while UBM students have obtained 32.14%. The score of EM students in this area is 63.07%. In the item dealing with arrangement of words and Phrases in their proper setting, RRM students have scored 39.33 which is much lower than 65.26, scored by UBM students. EM students have fared expectedly with their score of 36.1% in this item.

As the results of the analysis show, RRM students lag behind the UBM students in most of the items in which tests were conducted. Further research may reveal whether lack of motivation or the socio-economic conditions are responsible for the poor performance of the students of Rural areas.

The second table in each section of Chapters three, four and five shows that in each item science students have fared better than Arts students. It is interesting to note that in some cases the difference between the two is not remarkable. It is quite negligible in case of the test in some set of
English verbs which are commonly confused by foreign learners. While Science students have scored 80.4% and Arts students have obtained 79.29%. However, the difference between their performances in question no. 10 (auxiliary verb) and 13 (use of number) of Chapter-4 and in Section 5.2 (arrangement of word in a sentence) of Chapter-5 is remarkable. It varies between 10% and 20%. Hence, remedial teaching may be necessary to eradicate their errors in these areas.

Sexwise analysis of the performance of students is given in the fourth table in Chapter-3 and in each section of Chapters 4 and 5. It emerges from the analysis that in the items dealing with prepositions (UBM), nouns (RBM), adjectives (RBM), pronouns (RBM), tenses (UBM), Phrasal verbs (RBM, UBM), auxiliary verbs (RBM), Number (RBM, UBM) and arrangement of words in sentences (REB) the difference between the performance of boys and that of girls is around 10%. In other items, however, the difference between their performances is negligible.

Though the difference between the performance of boys and that of girls is not remarkable on the whole, considerable difference seems to exist between the performances of boys and girls in case of REM schools. Further research may reveal why this difference exists between their performances in the REM schools.
6.2 Hindrances to learning English as a Second Language

Section I of this Chapter has presented a brief review of the performance of six hundred students in different levels of English grammar and the collocation patterns in English. In this section an attempt is made to review the problems which young learners face in learning English as a second language. It will be confined mainly to the discussion of problems relating to those items only in which tests were administered to some Bengalee students.

The first item in the questionnaire deals with English spelling which is seemingly erratic. Anyone dealing with Modern English spelling is sure to be surprised by the apparent anomalies between spelling and pronunciation of Modern English. A teacher of English who knows the historical reasons behind the gradual changes in the forms of English words can satisfy the curiosity of his students who are eager to know them. In Section four of the third Chapter of the present study it has been shown how after the invention of the Printing Press this anomaly between spelling and pronunciation of English words developed. Moreover, during the Renaissance spellings of many words were remodelled in closer conformity with their Latin originals although the pronunciation of such words remained unaffected. However, it may be impressed
upon the young learners of English that English spelling is not completely chaotic. Some spellings stand for a particular phoneme and most of the consonant letters have stable values. Of course there are exceptions. But once the learner learns the regular spellings and is taught to note the exceptions as he comes across them, he will have a better grasp of the subject. Tomskin in 'The Teaching of English' says, "Spelling is caught rather than taught." If the pupils read carefully they will mark the correct spelling of words. Words to be spelled must be presented very vividly. Further the teacher is giving the spelling of a word orally, through sight or movement in writing, the presentation should be very vivid. Pronunciation and enunciation should be clear and sufficiently loud and emphatic. Interest is the fly wheel of successful learning and it can be roused if children understand the need of spelling words correctly. The joy is of written expression will press home on them this need. Drill has a definite place in the teaching and learning of spelling. A careful and correct pronunciation seems to be the key to successful spelling.

English language is very particular about the use of articles and this area is considered problematic to Bengali students. In the relevant section of Chapter-4 the sources of
difficulty regarding use of articles in English, has already been dealt with. It has also been shown that mother tongue interference, ignorance of rule restrictions, carelessness on the part of the young learner, inadequate exposure to English are the main sources of difficulty. More attention should be paid to definiteness and indefiniteness when teaching English to young learners. It may be impressed upon them that while the absence of articles is very frequent in Bengali, the number of sentences without any article is rare in English. All these differences may be presented not in isolated sentences, as is often the case, but also, and indeed more importantly, in larger stretches of discourse. Their attention may be drawn to rule restrictions when the need arises.

In section of Chapter 4 the errors in prepositions have been discussed. It is a serious mistake to use the wrong preposition in English since its omission or insertion may imply a difference in meaning. They constitute one of the greatest difficulties for the foreign learner. The difficulty lies in the fact that each preposition can indicate several different relation or concepts and conversely, the same relationship can be indicated by several different prepositions. All these points have been discussed in the relevant
section of Chapter-4 while dealing with sources of difficulty relating to use of Propositions. Errors in this area arise mainly due to ignorance about the collocation patterns in English and partly due to mother tongue interference. It may be impressed upon the young learner that the meaning of an English preposition should not be equated with that of a Bengali Preposition in spite of the apparent similarity that exists between the two. The Prepositions may be taught in communicative situations, beginning with those that are real and relevant to the student. Moreover, they may familiarise themselves with the collocational patterns of English prepositions and learn when to insert and when to omit prepositions in English.

In Section 3 of Chapter-4 errors in noun have been discussed. While dealing with errors in this area, sources of difficulty in the use of nouns have been referred to. There are many sets of nouns in English which have a loose sense of synonymy. To Bengalee learners they appear perfectly synonymous. Hence, they make errors while using such nouns in their English sentences. The difficulty with a Bengalee learner is that in his mother tongue only one word can convey meaning of two or more such words. A list of such nouns often confused, may be prepared and the learner's attention may be drawn to them when they confuse such sets of seemingly synonymous nouns.
A Bengalee learner often comes across many sets of adjectives in English which though different in meaning to a native speaker of English, appear perfectly synonymous to them. They often find no difference between them as they can convey the meanings of such apparently synonymous adjectives with only one word in their mother tongue. As a result of this confusion many errors are made by them while using such adjectives in their English sentences. This is due to mother tongue interference. A list of adjectives which are commonly confused by Bengalee learners may be prepared and the young learners may be given sufficient practice in the use of such apparently synonymous adjectives.

Bengalee learners often make errors in the use of personal pronouns. Bengalee learners of English often make errors when they use such pronouns in a comparative sense e.g.: *Ram is better than him.*

They use the English particle than as equivalent to a preposition. Sometimes Bengalee students write.

* This book is better than him.*

The error in the above sentence is due to the fact that Bengali has no equivalent expression for the English sentence, *This book is better than his.* To convey the meaning of this
sentence a Bengalee student has to write: "This book is better than his book." Another source of difficulty for a Bengalee learner in this area arises out of the fact that in the mother tongue there is no change of pronoun according to gender except, of course, in case of neuter gender. Hence young learners often use he and she, his and her as interchangeable. These errors are due to the difference in the systems of the two languages.

Attention of young Bengalee learners may also be drawn to the differences between our and ours, your and yours etc. with the help of illustrative sentences.

The tense system in English is much more complicated than that in Bengali. Bengalee learners often make errors in this area under the influence of their mother tongue. In Bengali usually no distinction is made between the simple past and the present perfect tense. Sometimes the present continuous is used in place of the simple present. Moreover, in Bengali there is no form of the verb which is equivalent to the past perfect in English. In English the past perfect tense is used to indicate the remoter past. Though the concept is there in Bengali, no different form is used to indicate the remoter past. The simple past tense is used to convey the same. Students' attention may be drawn to the contrastive features of the two languages in this area.
Phrasal verbs constitute a great difficulty to a foreign learner of English. They acquire an idiomatic meaning. Hence, one cannot predict the meaning of a phrasal verb from the meaning of its constituents. Phrasal verbs are used very frequently by the native speaker. Hence they become a part of his active vocabulary. They have to be learnt over a long period of time until they become a part of his active vocabulary. Sometimes, a combination of a verb and a preposition may have different meanings in different contexts e.g., *He ran out of the school* is a sentence the meaning of which is easy to understand. But the meaning of the sentence, *He ran out of food* is that he had no food. Hence phrasal verbs have to be learnt as individual items over a considerable period of time.

Some sets of English verbs cause a lot of difficulties to the foreign learner of English. They appear to be synonymous to a Bengalee student learning English as a second language. Hence they use such verbs as perfectly synonymous and use them interchangeably in their English sentences. Here again ignorance about collocation patterns of such verbs in English seems to be the main source of the learner's difficulty in this area.
As the results of the test in the use of the auxiliary verbs indicate, they pose a great problem to a Bengalee learner of English. The overall proficiency acquired in this item by the students of RBM schools is only 14.7%, while it is 30.43 in case of UBM students. The main difficulty which a Bengalee student faces is that the system of forming interrogative and negative sentences in his mother tongue is quite different from that in English. In Bengali no change of position of verb and subject is necessary to frame an interrogative sentence. Moreover, no auxiliary verb is needed in the construction of interrogative and negative sentences. Besides, positional change of the verb and the subject, an auxiliary verb is needed to frame an interrogative or a negative sentence in English except when such a sentence has an appropriate form of be as the main verb. Another important rule is that when sentences are framed with auxiliary verbs in the above two cases, it is the auxiliary verb and not the main verb that is inflected when necessity arises. Bengalee learners often overgeneralize and inflect both the main verb and the auxiliary verb e.g.

- He does not goes
- He did not went

It is the complexity of the system of framing interrogative and negative sentences in English which is largely responsible
for too many errors, made by the Bengalee students in this area.

It has already been shown that many sets of common English nouns, adjectives and verbs are often confused by young Bengalee students. Similarly some sets of adverbs in English also confuse a Bengalee learner of English. He is not aware of the basic difference between such verbs and commits errors in this area. Here also the main cause behind a Bengalee learner's errors is his ignorance about the collocation patterns in English.

Young Bengalee learners of English get puzzled when they come across situations where one word is used as more than one part of speech. Though such situations exist in Bengali also, yet they do not occur so frequently in Bengali as in English. Verbs may be formed from almost every noun. Sometimes a verb may be formed even from a proper name, e.g. the verb boycott (to refuse to have Social or Commercial relations with a person, a country etc.) has been formed from the name of C.C. Boycott, Irish landagent (d. 1897) who was ostracized by the people for his tyranny. Sometimes nouns are used as adjectives and adjectives as nouns. Bengalee learners are puzzled by the frequency of such occurrences.
Errors in the use of number occur mainly due to ignorance of rules. A Bengali learner fails to understand why a singular verb is used in the sentence, 'The class is unanimous', and why a plural verb is used in the sentence, 'The class are divided in their opinion'. Many irregular plurals in English confuse a Bengalee student. Man from man, calves from calf, oxen from ox are all examples of irregular plurals. They are relics of the past and they have to be learnt as individual items. Bengali nouns have no plural inflections except when they are used as subjects in sentences. Some nouns of multitude are affixed to nouns to indicate plurality. Hence, errors made by Bengalee students in this area are due partly to their ignorance of rule restrictions in the use of number in English and partly to the complexity of the system of English.

Section-I of Chapter-5 deals with errors in change of speech which are commonest of all errors made by young learners of English in West Bengal. In Bengali, more particularly in spoken Bengali, the distinction between direct and indirect forms of speech are not always followed. Hence, Bengalee learners seldom change the word order, the tense form, the adverbs of time and place and the pronouns while changing a direct form of speech into an indirect one. These cause many
errors in their English sentences and sometimes distort the meaning of what they want to convey. If, however, young learners are taught the rules regarding change of speech in English, after their foundation of Bengali grammar becomes strong, it is expected that they would learn them better.

The last section of Chapter-5 deals with errors made by Bengalee learners. Errors made in this area by Bengalee learners are mainly due to the differences in the structures of English and Bengali. While the word order in English is SVO, it is SOV in Bengali. In English the commonest question form is also governed by the principle of word order.

Question sentences in English are constructed by placing the auxiliary before the subject. In a negative sentence in English, the negative marker is placed between the auxiliary verb and the main verb, e.g. He does not go. In Bengali, however, this sentence will appear in the following form:

* He goes not

In English the relative pronoun is never far from the noun it qualifies. If this order is not followed in English, it will distort the meaning of the sentence.
It emerges from the above discussion that errors in English among Bengalee learners are mainly due to mother tongue interference, inherent difficulty in the system of English, overgeneralization of the system of English, ignorance of rule restrictions and finally, lack of motivation. Once the sources of difficulty in learning English are identified, it may not be difficult to teach English to Bengalee learners successfully.

It may finally be said that regular practice in correct usage is bound to impress proper habits of speech and writing. Usage has a formative power and the indirect instruction that it imparts will, in the end, provide students with the unerring language sense, which all people possess in their mother tongue, which transcends all rules of grammar, and is the only sure guide in the use of language.