CHAPTER I

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE TEACHING IN BANGLADESH: A HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE SURVEY

1.1 ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING: A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW IN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Knowledge of the past is essential to understand the present. If we wish to have a clear idea about the present status of English teaching we should have a thorough knowledge of the history of language teaching in general and of English language teaching in particular because overall principles of language teaching accumulated through ages, no doubt, have had impact on English teaching method of today. Regarding the importance of the knowledge of history, Stern says "Through studying the history of language teaching we can gain perspective on present day thought and trends and find directions for future growth. Knowing the historical context is helpful to an understanding of language teaching theories" (Stern 1983: 76). Titone also emphasizes the importance of the knowledge of the history of language teaching. He says:

"History gives us a perspective. A comparative view of parallel or past experiences can illustrate present trends in teaching. By comparing the new with the old, we better perceive the distinctive traits of today's language teaching methodology, which seems to be characterized by a new and more scientific orientation" (Titone 1968: 2).

The history of language teaching takes us back to the remote past. "The necessity to communicate with foreign people, although never so critically or widely felt as today, is as old as the human race or at least the tower of Babel! Military officials, diplomats, merchants of past had to meet foreign populations and exchange communications of various kinds" (ibid: 4).
through coming in contact with people speaking them in their environment. This process was similar to the one followed in learning the mother tongue.

We know that in Europe before the establishment of the Roman empire the Romans studied Greek as a second language engaging Greek tutors and Greek speaking slaves and servants. With the expansion of Roman empire, "Other peoples began to learn Latin until that language became the international language of the Western World, the language of the church and state and for a long time the sole language of learning, the only medium of instruction in schools. And it remained so in some European countries until modern times" (Mackey 1965:141). During the Middle Ages Latin was the language of teaching. According to Mackey (1964) the teaching method was mostly grammar oriented and it was "designed to enable the clerics to speak, read and write in Latin" (ibid :14). Moreover it was at that time the medium of instruction. But Titone says:

"The medieval man was bilingual. Latin was taught intensely like a mother tongue, at least up until the Renaissance period. Latin was still a living language and it was taught in a living way first orally and then through reading and composition" (Titone 1968:8).

It is obvious that grammar teaching was a later development. It is also affirmed by Stern when he cites Kelley:

"Dialogue, a popular form of text present in recent decades, was in constant use in the language classroom right through the history of language teaching" (Stern1983:80).

The language of the Latin classics was considered 'original', 'pure' and 'correct'. Efforts were made to replace the spoken Latin by so-called 'original' Latin. In course of time long and complicated Latin grammar instead of being a preparation for studying the classics became an end in
itself. And grammar study came to be considered "a means of mental training" (Titone 1969:8).

During the Renaissance period modern languages like French, German, English were taught to enable the learner to communicate successfully in his day to day life.

English gained respect as a language with the ouster of Richard II by the House of Lancaster in 1399. English then came to be used in royal proclamations. It also acquired a new dimension when the laws of the kingdom were framed in English in fifteenth century. English was gradually coming to the forefront because of the royal patronage. "To the Tudors English was the language of the nation, spoken by all, from the king himself downwards" (Howatt 1984:4).

From the sixteenth century onwards the aim of modern "language study was essentially practical: to acquire the ability to get along in the ordinary circumstance of daily life. No reference, therefore, was made either to literature or to grammar" (Lehmann as quoted in Titone 1968:9).

At that time except in absence of grammar, literary texts and dialogue forms were used as teaching materials in imitation of early Latin teaching. At the end of the fifteenth century double manuals in the 'maniere tradition' (a collection of usual everyday dialogues) aiming to teach English to French speakers started to appear. William Coxton prepared the first short book of dialogues in bilingual form in 1483. In mid-sixteenth century a French man called Gabriel Meurier made a living by teaching English to the French. Howatt (1984) regards him as the first teacher of English as a foreign language.

During the reign of Elizabeth there was a flux of refugees from France. They required English to merge with the main stream. To meet the
demand Jacquies Bellot, a refugee, wrote two manuals under the titles - 'The Schoolmaster' (1580) and 'Familiar Dialogues' (1586) which were a breakthrough in the history of English teaching. His dialogues had domestic setting with a strong emphasis on shopping. Two other Frenchmen- Claudius Holyband and John Florio also taught English in England for communication purpose only.

Throughout seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the teaching of Latin grammar was the most dominant occupation of schools in Europe. John Lily's (1468-1522) 'A Short Introduction of Grammar' was best selling language text-book. It was also known as Royal Grammar.

In late 1620s John Webbe initiated an anti-grammar trend of language teaching methodology designing a new text book of great originality. He believed that language should never be taught by learning grammar rules but by "use and custom". According to Webbe grammar rather hindered the learner's progress. Howatt (1984) regards his view as a form of 'Direct Method'.

The French essayist Montaign (1533-92) had a great influence in language teaching. He insisted on learning language through direct contact with its native speakers and getting acquainted with the mind, customs and culture of the foreign people.

Jan Amos Comenius (1592-1670) is well-known in the history of language teaching. He became known as a textbook writer in Europe. He may be regarded as the pioneer of the 'Direct Method'. His "guiding principle is the emphasis on practice in language learning. Every language must be learnt by practice rather than by rules, especially by reading, repeating, copying and by written and oral attempts at imitation" (Comenius as cited in Titone 1968:14-15). He considered that "All
languages are easier to learn by practice than from rules. But rules assist and strengthen knowledge derived from practice" (Fife as cited in Stern 1983:78).

In 1685 England again experienced a heavy influx of exiles. They needed to learn English. The teachers who helped them were Paul Festeace, a Frenchman and a Swiss called Gay Miege whose 'New Method of Learning English' (1685) "raised the teaching of English as a foreign language to a standard of expertise and professionalism it had not enjoyed before" (Howatt 1984:53). He published his Nouvelle Methode in 1685 and brought out an English translation of it called 'The English Grammar' (1688). His grammar deals with English orthography, pronunciation, basic paradigms and word-forms. It also contains a long list of vocabulary in alphabetical order based on topic area and followed by everyday dialogues on shopping and so on. His teaching methods deal with pronunciation, spelling and grammar followed by practice and by language study using dialogues and phrases. The teaching of English as a foreign language attained maturity with Miege's 'Methode'. By studying the works of native phoneticians and grammarians he was able to provide a substantial manual for teaching English as a foreign language.

In the eighteenth century, a stable period, English teaching was a less common activity. But there grew an interest for English philosophy and literature abroad. This created interest in English language and prompted the study of English grammar of John Wallis. It was a native attempt to write a textbook for teaching English as a foreign language. In the meantime Latin lost its status as a scholastic lingua-franca and new English schools were getting established. As a result demand for English grammar was growing fast from the new English schools.
Locally produced English grammars were being written in France, the Netherlands, Denmark, Germany and Russia. "In 1797 the first European text book for teaching English appeared in Serampore in Bengal" (Howatt 1984:61).

Since new philosophical ideas started growing up in England, they drew the attention of the scholars abroad. The foreigners showed keen interest in the works of Bacon, John Locke and David Hume. The works of English literature and philosophy were available in French translation. But the translations appeared inadequate and lacked the spirit of the original. Many people thought it improper to study a subject through translation. They attempted to learn the language so that they could read it first hand.

In the eighteenth century English earned a place in schools of Germany as English literature especially dramatic works of Shakespeare took the country by storm. To study Shakespeare became an obsession there. In Italy also there grew an interest for English which was taught there in the form of dialogues.

In the sixteenth century attempts were made by two scholars to bring about a reform in the English orthography. One was John Hart (...1574) who published his "Opening of the Unreasonable Writing of Our English Tongue", criticising "the inability of contemporary orthography to represent phonetic system of the language adequately". He proposed some reform. Unfortunately it was not accepted.

The other scholar was Richard Mulcaster, the most famous and influential pedagogue of his day. He wanted to provide a stable spelling system derived from 'tradition' or 'custom', modified in the light of the principles of 'reason' and 'sound'. 'Reason' should ensure consistency and regularity and 'sound' implied a predictable relationship between sounds
and spellings though not necessarily on 'the one symbol one sound' principle of John Hart (ibid: 90).

But all the efforts for reformation failed because they did not get the royal support.

The Restoration of the Stuart monarchy in 1660 replaced all the reforms in education introduced by Cromwellian Commonwealth by old order. But it could not abolish English medium schools. After the Protestant succession as the Glorious Revolution of 1688, the teaching of English came in the forefront. It became an urgent need of the day to produce grammars, spelling books, dictionaries and other materials for teaching English.

The Protestant revolution destroyed Latin as the international lingua-franca. But "the decline of Latin also brought with it a new justification for teaching Latin. Latin was said to develop intellectual abilities and study of Latin grammar became an end in itself" (Richards and Rodgers 1986:2). "Latin had ceased to be the medium of instruction and the teaching and application of its rules had formalised into a sort of intellectual exercise" (Mackey 1965: 143).

The eighteenth century was a very favourable period for the rapid growth of English. Samuel Johnson (1709-1784), John Walkar (1782-1807) and Aoah Webster (1757-1843) came forward with their dictionaries to perform the great job of 'fixing' the language (standard English). The grammars by Lowth, Murry and Cobbett appeared in Latin model of prescriptive nature in order to make the reader careful about correct English.

Ben Johnson and John Wallis also wrote grammars of English keeping in mind the difficulties of the foreign learners of English.
The approach to foreign language teaching in the nineteenth century came to be known as Grammar - Translation Method. The Oxford and Cambridge Local Examinations adopted the Grammar - Translation Method for teaching languages including English. This method was taken up by Ahn, Ollendorf and Kart Plotz.

The method of Johann Franz Ahn (1796-1865) was very easy. After a short introduction to pronunciation he began his basic teaching materials. He discussed his grammatical summary in form of paradigms and then he talked about a dozen of vocabulary items which were followed by a set of sentences to be translated into the mother tongue. There was also a section containing sentences to be translated into the foreign language. His teaching course was based on a sequence of linguistic categories and these categories were exemplified in simple sentences for intensive practice.

H.G. Allendorf (1803 - 1865) was another leading exponent of the Grammar - Translation Method. His originality lies in the 'interactional theory' which contains exercises in question - answer form in mother tongue to be translated into the foreign language. But there is no place for translation from other direction.

In the middle of the nineteenth century, individual reactions began to appear against the Grammar-Translation Method. During the later half of the century these reactions developed into a movement known as Natural Method in the history of language teaching.

Jean Joseph Jacotot (1770-1840) and Cloude Marcel were the pioneers of the movement. Marcel advocated "the abolition of translation and grammar rules and teaching of language first through comprehension of texts, through abundant listening, then through reading of simple and familiar materials followed later by speaking and writing" (Mackey
1965:143). He was in favour of teaching the receptive skills before the productive ones.

Among all the reformers of the mid nineteenth century F. Gouin (1831-1896) was the best known. "Gouin developed an approach to teaching a foreign language based on his observation of children's use of language. He believed that language learning was facilitated through using language to accomplish events consisting of a sequences of related actions. His method used situation and theme as ways of organizing and presenting oral language" (Richards and Rodgers 1986:5-6). "For Gouin the sentence was the basic unit of speech and each sentence was to be associated with another to form a chain. These chains of sentences dealt with everyday acts and activities based on the interest of the learners not those of the teacher" (Mackey 1965:144).

About that time another new element was added to language teaching - descriptive phonetics. The International Phonetic Association was founded in 1886 and its International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) was designed to enable the sounds of any language to be accurately transcribed.

Henry Sweet (1845-1914) emphasized the training of the language teacher in phonetics. In his opinion a teacher trained in phonetics is better than a native language teacher.

The writings of these writers reflected the emergence of the discipline called applied linguistics and showed the way to how the principles of the applied linguistics could best be put into practice. Along with this an interest in naturalistic principles for language teaching was getting stronger. "In fact at various times throughout the history of language teaching, attempts have been made to make second language
teaching-learning more like first language learning" (Richards and Rodgers 1986: 9).

The natural method has no place for translation or mother tongue use. Meaning is conveyed through demonstration or action. Instead of explaining grammar rules the method encourages the learner to use the language extensively in the classroom. "These natural teaching principles provided a foundation for what came to be known as the Direct Method" (ibid:4).

At the beginning the Direct Method was disorganised. "It was only at the turn of the century that Direct Method textbooks began to follow a definite pattern" (Mackey 1965:145). Berlitz was the right man for the job. He was not an academic methodologist but he was an excellent systematizer of basic language teaching materials on 'Direct Method line'. In Europe and America he opened two hundred schools to teach different languages including English.

During the first half of the present century, the teaching of English as a foreign language emerged as an autonomous profession. The development of language teaching principles in applied linguistics and the development of the concept of English language teaching (ELT) were the factors behind it. The concept regarding teaching of English as second language for utilitarian functions in the communication of knowledge emerged by the twenties of this century and "it was not until the fifties that the modern distinction between English as a 'foreign' and a 'second' language (EFL and ESL) became wide spread" (Howatt 1984:212).

Daniel Jones and Horald Palmer delivered lectures on English phonetics and wrote books on English language teaching. Palmer and Michael West carried out research on English teaching in Japan and Bengal
in twenties and thirties. Like them Lowrence Faucett also taught English in many countries and developed the first large-scale Direct Method course for English as a foreign language and started a training course for teachers of English as a foreign language.

C.E. Eckersley wrote ‘Essential English for Foreign Students’ (1938) which helped the teachers to teach English needed for a variety of purposes. The establishment of the British Committee for Relations with Other Countries in 1934, which was renamed the British Council the following year, was the first step towards a professional organisation concerned with teaching of English as a foreign language. After the War it started publishing a professional journal in 1946 under the title English Language Teaching which was renamed English Language Teaching Journal (ELTJ) in 1972. The Council also provided advanced training for its personnel and for sponsored students from overseas. It also assisted in setting up of Schools of Applied Linguistics at the universities of Edinburgh, Leeds, Essex, Lancaster, Reading and London.

In the case of material production, innovation took place first in the USA. Pattern practice, structural syllabus, the language laboratory and the programme learning that developed in the USA took England by surprise in the sixties. In the sixties, the English teaching world started formulating the notion of ESP (English for Special Purpose).

The technological inventions like tape-recorder, radio, language-laboratory etc. brought about considerable changes in language teaching methods. The real break-through in language teaching technology came from France with the development of the audio-visual courses at CEEDIF (a research at the Ecole Normale Supericure de St. Cloud near Paris) which married the tape recorder and the film strip in a system that entailed a minimum of classroom disruption.
The political, economic and technological changes that occurred in the world in the late fifties necessitated a redefining of the priorities of English language teaching and involvement of ESP for different branches of knowledge.

In the post colonial period there was heavy influx of immigrants in England. Learning English became essential for them. So in 1966 programmes such as 'Scope' and 'Concept' 7-9 were designed for the purpose. "By the late seventies TESL had formed a National Association for the Teaching of ESL to Adults (NATESLA-1978) which also administered training in TEFL" (Howatt 1984:221). Similarly two associations were set up in 1980 for TESL and TEFL in Scotland.

Acceptance of English as a language of science and technology, international commerce, finance and practical communication has given a new boost to the teaching of English leading to rapid development of English for special (more recently specific) purposes (ESP).

The seventies were dominated by communicative language teaching and "by 1980 virtually every publishing house had prompted new courses which adopted a communicative element of the one kind or another" (ibid: 226). "Courses in ESP are in great demand in countries anxious to familiarize numbers of their students with the latest developments in their fields of study in the English speaking world, and in other language areas whose research reports are rapidly translated into English" (Rivers 1981:471).

The history of language teaching has, thus, witnessed a number of approaches which evolved from time to time and place to place. "If we now glance back at the development of the language teaching method, we see that it first swings from the active oral use of Latin in Ancient and
Middletimes to the learning by rules of the Renaissance grammar, back to oral activity with Comenius, back to grammar rules with Plotz and back again to the primacy of speech in the Direct Method" (Mackey 1965:151). Kelley also holds the same opinion.

"Many present day practices and ideas have historical parallels. For example pattern drill has forerunners in substitution tables in the teaching grammars of sixteenth and seventeenth century. Dialogue a popular form of text preparation, in recent decades was in constant use in the language class right through the history of language teaching" (Kelley as cited in Stern 1983:80).

"In his (Kelley's) view the total corpus of language ideas accessible to language teachers has not changed basically in 2000 years. What have been in constant change are the way of building method from them and the part of the corpus that is acceptable varies from generation to generation as does the form in which ideas present themselves" (Stern 1983: 81).

There are two factors behind the change of method--one is the change of the role of language in the society and other is the change in the intellectual world. The study of the former is called 'parental sciences' and the other is the 'critical sciences' (Kelley 1969 as cited in Stern 1983). This is why Howatt says-

"Finally if there is one single source which has been responsible for stimulating innovation and activity - it is (in one or another of its various guises) applied linguistics. It has not performed miracles but as a focus of enquiry, critical examination and new ideas it has enriched the profession at least as much as it has irritated it" (Howatt 1984: 226).
1.2 TEACHING OF ENGLISH DURING THE BRITISH PERIOD

It is the story of 1498. Vasco de Gama, imbued with the indomitable Renaissance spirit braved the fury of the sea and discovered the sea-route to India which was lying ‘politically divided’, ‘torn by jealousy and mutual distrust’. It is also said that Thomas Stephens was the first Englishman visiting India in 1579 and perhaps he encouraged the merchants of London to come to India which was then reputed throughout the world for her fabulous wealth. Soon the East India Company arrived in India in search of fortune. At that time Portuguese was the lingua-franca for all commercial purposes as well as for contacting the Indians.

English was introduced much later in India and errand boys who acted as interpreters between the Indians and English traders were the first learners of English in India. The East India Company also had to teach English to the native militia engaged for the safety of their goods and life.

Like other European communities, the East India Company also started schools for introducing the Protestant teaching to their native subordinates through English in Trichinopoly. Haider Ali, the Raja of Tanjor and the Nawab of Arcot helped the missionaries set up schools for teaching English (Wadia as cited in Agnihotri and Khanna 1995:15). Later on such schools were also opened at Madras, Bombay and Calcutta. The twin objectives of these schools were to educate boys and girls for employment in company and to convert them into Christianity (S.P. Sinha 1978:15).

There were some Englishmen who wanted to introduce European knowledge in India through English for converting the natives into Christians, expanding Company’s business and for brining the natives
nearer to the rulers. They thought "the teaching of Gospel would ensure that they remained loyal" (Tulsi Ram 1991:31).

After the Battle of Plassey (1757) the East India Company virtually became the Master of India and English started its triumphant journey without any hindrance. Besides missionary schools there also came up many other English teaching schools which charged exorbitant fees to meet the pecuniary needs of their founders.

Grant, who was in favour of English, argued that since Persian was accepted by the Indians there would be no problem on their part in accepting English too. As to the question of education in India the British rulers were divided into two houses - Orientalists and Anglicists. Warren Hastings. William Jones, Edmund Burke, William Robertson, Craufurd, Horace Wilson and host of others belonged to the first school and William Bentinck. Grant, Alexander Duff, Travelyan, Macaulay and others to the second school. The Orientalist view was that Indians should be educated through Indian languages for cultivating Indian values, morale and classical languages e.g. Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian and European knowledge through translation because "the Indian people had a way of life that was valid for them, however different it might be from the Western civilization" (Embree as cited in Tariq Rahman 1997:29).

The Anglicist view was that Indians should be educated through English for cultivating European knowledge and science because according to them there was no education in India and the natives were deep in superstitions and darkness. The Oriental-Anglicist controversy continued till 1835.

Sir Stephen Lastington and Randle Jackson pointed out that education (English education) would give modern ideas - the ideas of the
French Revolution to Indians and that would be the end of the empire in India, as it had been in America (S.N. Mukherjee as cited in S.P. Sinha 1979: 28). So in Orientalist line, Calcutta Madrasa for Muslims and the Banaras Sanskrit College for Hindus were established to win over the Indians. Soon Calcutta Madrasa was taken over by the Court of Directors for its powerful impact on Muslims.

The establishment of the Fort William College in 1800 was a milestone in the history of Indian education as it set a pattern for English books, comparative grammars, dissertations on European and Indian laws, history, geography, natural sciences and text-books for modern Indian languages.

Another turning point in the history of Indian education was the Act of 1813 which initiated the state system of education in India and the East India Company was compelled to accept the responsibility of education in India (J.C. Aggarwal 1983:1).

In 1823 the General Committee of Public Instruction was set up to look after education in India. It was pro-Orientalist. So some orientalist colleges were established. As the Company government required some native assistants for administration, the General Committee was under heavy pressure to attach English classes to these colleges. And also plans were drawn to set up in Calcutta a separate English College for teaching English. The Madrasas were also encouraged to teach English and special allowance was given as incentive. In 1833 English schools were set up at Delhi, Benaras and Allahabad.

In the mean time the Calcutta Book Society and the Calcutta School Society were founded. They did a lot for spread and improvement of English education in Bengal by publishing textbooks and making them available at the reduced prices to the needy.
In the field of English education in India, a new glorious chapter opened with the establishment of Hindu College at Calcutta on 20 January 1817. "No institution is comparable to it in the process of modernizing the Indian" (S.P. Sinha 1978:36). The noted historian R.C. Majumdar (1960) says that "it was Hindu College which created modern Bengal one might say modern India". It became essentially an ideal centre for teaching English and European accomplishments.

The period from 1823 to 1834 was characterized by the controversy between Orientalists and the Anglicists on aim, objects and medium of instruction. "Das Gupta (1970:40-45) has summarized the language controversy at this critical point in the history of India. There were three options available as to the medium of instruction: classical oriental languages (Sanskrit and Arabic), Indian vernacular languages (Bengali, Tamil, Hindi etc) and English" (Agnihotri and Khanna 1995: 17). Nurullah and Naik (1971) also take cognizance of the development of these three schools of options.

"For Indians, the greatest inducement for obtaining a western education appears to have been upward social and economic mobility which came through employment with the new rulers" (Tariq Rahman 1997:30). Therefore there was a great demand for English from the Indians. Raja Ram Mohan also built-up public opinion in favour of English. He declared that "the Sanskrit system of education would be best calculated to keep the country in darkness" (Sharp as cited in Sareen 1992: 8).

With the passage of time the supporters of English (Anglicists) grew stronger and Directors of the Company grew more and more impatient with Orientalist policies in India. Under such pressure the Court of Directors, therefore, became almost bound to act in favour of the English education. They also suggested that English educated Indians should be given high
posts in administration and judiciary and be held in high esteem by the government.

Montuart Elphinstone, the governor of the Bombay Presidency did a lot for English education by setting up Poona Sanskrit College in 1821 and many English schools in district headquarters. But the condition of education in Madras Presidency was not like that in Bengal and Bombay. Taking note of it the Court of Directors sent a Despatch to Madras on 29 September 1830 seeking improvement in education on the model of Bengal and Bombay.

In 20s and 30s of the nineteenth century the controversy between the Orientalists and the Anglicists reached its climax due to various interpretations of the section 43 of the Charter Act of 1813. In this crucial hour Lord T.B. Macaulay came to India and as head of the Committee of Public Instruction he had to give his decision about the contention. He turned down the arguments of the Orientalists and sided with the Anglicists. Not only this he also made some derogatory statements about the classical literature. In his Minutes he says that "a single shelf of good European library was worth the whole of native literature of India and Arabia" (J.C. Aggarwal 1983:6). He felt the necessity of the introduction of English in India as "Indian people cannot at present be educated by means of their mother tongues. He felt that Indian languages and literature were of little intrinsic value and Indian history, astronomy, medicine etc. were full of errors and falsehood" (Agnihotri and Khanna 1994:16).

Since it was not possible to educate all he declared:

"We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons - Indian in blood and colour but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect. To that class we may leave it to refine the vernacular dialects with terms of science borrowed
from the western nomenclature and to render them by degree fit vehicles for conveying knowledge to the great mass of population” (J.C. Aggarwal 1983: 11).

According to Horace Wilson, a great Sanskrit scholar, the hidden 'aims and objectives' of Macaulay's policy were to subvert Indian literature and religion and glorify English.

"By annihilating native literature, by sweeping away all sources of pride and pleasure in their own mental efforts, by rendering a whole people dependent upon a remote and unknown country for all their ideas and for the very words in which to clothe them, we should degrade their character, depress their energies and render them incapable of aspiring to any intellectual distinction".


Lord Willaim Bentinck accepted Macaulay's Minute on Indian Education in March 1835. Thus the Western System of Education was adopted for educating the Indians. "It was from that time, a century and a half ago, that the government started setting up schools and colleges to convert Indians, the South Asians of today, into Brown Englishmen by imparting Western knowledge to them, a tradition their surrogates have faithfully followed to this day" (Ahmed Ali 1993:7).

After the departure of Bentinck, Auckland the next governor general, took a middle course following both Macaulay's recommendations and the Orientalist view. In the meantime English and modern Indian languages succeeded in replacing the classical languages both in education and administration by 1837.
Hardinge made English more acceptable to the natives by making government jobs available only to English knowing people. And a vast horizon of jobs opened before the Indians with the introduction of railways, telephone and plenty of other scientific fields of development during the time of Dalhousie. The people were caught by the storm of learning English for getting government jobs.

Sir Charles Wood's Despatch (1854) known as the Magna Carta of Indian Education recommended vernaculars for lower level and English for higher stage of education and the establishment of three universities at the capitals of three presidencies. Accordingly the universities were founded in 1857. His system aimed at mass education instead of class education.

During the First War of Independence in 1857 no English educated Indians took part in it, rather stood as mute spectators having the least sympathy with it. At this the government became determined to spread English education as the Indian national stood divided internally and intrinsically because of English education. So, many schools were set up in different parts of the country both at government and private initiatives. The universities also started functioning. As there was great demand for more universities, the Punjab and the Allahabad universities were set up in 1882 and 1887.

English became so popular that in some cases it was taught before the child could read and write his own vernacular. In Bengal English was the medium of instruction in high schools. In Madras it was taught from class 3rd at Primary level.

Lord Curzon called a meeting of all the Directors of the Public Instruction at Simla in 1901. There he put great emphasis on the expansion and improvement of Primary education but strongly disapproved of
teaching foreign language at Primary stage. At the same time he supported the use of English at High schools (S.K. Sareen 1993:15).

In the second Simla Conference (August 1917) it was reported that teachers liked giving instructions not in vernacular but in English as a matter of pride. It was also reported that there was a great demand for teaching English. As a consequence of Jallianwalabagh killing in 1919 Gandhi at Nagpur Congress in 1920 gave a clarion call to students to boycott English schools and colleges and appealed to the countrymen to establish national colleges and schools. In response innumerable national institutions came up in different parts of the country and thousands of students left their schools and colleges. As a result English education suffered a setback. But with the cooling down of the national movement there was again heavy rush for admission to government institutions.

Though at the university level the dissertations of very high quality as outputs of scholastic efforts of Indian students were coming out, the overall standard of English teaching-learning was coming down alarmingly. This happened because the commercial motives could not always be a right incentive for 'high or good education'.

After the passing of the Government of India Act 1935, Vernacular was made the medium of instruction for basic and adult education. English remained the medium of instruction for Secondary, Higher Secondary and university stages.

With the outbreak of the World War II the education system at many places in India suffered seriously as the education institutions closed down for months together.
In 1945 the War came to an end. After two years the British government bade farewell to India leaving behind a very powerful weapon called English which now has become the source and token of prestige, power, success and social superiority (R.S. Gupta and K. Kapoor 1999:17) for a very small section of people called elite who like their past masters, colonize the rest of their nation in all the three countries of the subcontinent e.g. India, Pakistan and Bangladesh and who have very little common in spirit with their fellow beings.
1.3 TEACHING OF ENGLISH AFTER 1947

In the subcontinent English was introduced 'through a historical accident'. But it has become a pattern of life and its cultural influence continues to be strong in Pakistan. English was so deep-rooted that "the language of the domains of power, administration, judiciary, military, education and commerce etc, is still English, as it was under the British rule before" (Tariq Rahman 1997:1). The constitution of Pakistan and "the body of the law are codified in English. As a consequence, judgements and precedents, rules and regulations, orders and instructions, standing procedures and major policy documents of the federal as well as the provincial governments are in English; information - technological, economic, sociological and statistical - is also largely available in English" (Anjum Riyazul Haque 1993: 14-15).

There are many reasons for this status of English in Pakistan.

It usually happens that an ex-colonial language is used as the language of wider communication in a country where many indigenous languages are used in the domains of power. In this capacity it facilitates access to science and technology and brings about modernization. However, as English is also the vehicle of western culture, this dominance of English is described as linguistic and cultural imperialism. Thus at the international level, and even at the national level, English provides social mobility. It gives access to power and knowledge. It is, therefore, observed that in countries which were colonies of England, most of the literate people are drawn to the privileged ex-colonial language, it is an upper class status marker and facilitates or at least gives hope of moving into the national or even the cosmopolitan elite.
Another reason for the retention of English in Pakistan was that at the time of partition, Pakistan was and still is a multilingual state with a great linguistic complexity. "Of the five provinces that then formed Pakistan, none could boast of a monolithic linguistic structure. Linguistically, the most tightly knit were East Bengal and the North-West Frontier Province.... The other provinces had a variety of languages" (Anjum Riyazul Haque 1993: 13). This situation, especially the status of Bengali created a lot of problems for new-born state. "In multilingual societies, choosing a national language and a language to serve as the medium of instruction in the educational system sometimes involves problems of serious dimensions" (Louis D. Hayes 1987: 157).

Bengali was the language of the majority province. So a rightful place was claimed for Bengali. But the protagonists of Urdu opposed it. "The state apparatus which had to be set up overnight from nothing could not bear the burden of having to start with a new language. The use of English was inevitable for system maintenance: the ruling elite were trained to do their official work in English. English perforce continued to be the official language of Pakistan. It also had the advantage of being a compromise candidate, at least for the interim period, since the adoption of one of the two languages of indigenous origin -- Urdu or Bengali, as the national language could have meant the alienation of large sections of the populace, especially in an atmosphere charged with political activism generated by Bengali nationalism. And the switch to both would have meant confusion, not least for being premature" (Anjum Riyazul Hoque 1993:13-14).

In Pakistan, according to Tariq Rahman (1997:232) for the expanding middle class the best chance to acquire power, social prestige and affluence was by joining the superior civil services, the officer cadre of
the armed force or the professions for which the knowledge of English was crucial. And it was also impossible to enter the other 'most prestigious job and the select circle of fashionable and sophisticated' without the knowledge of English.

In Pakistan both bureaucracy and military have always been powerful even when the country is not governed by generals. Both these elite are trained in English. Naturally they continue to use English. They have access to positions of power both within the state apparatus and abroad through their ability to use English. As English is a marker of high status and intellectual ability, they invest in it by educating their children in it. This makes members of the ruling elite supporters of English in their personal capacity, no matter whatever their official position may be. As many of the feudal lords are English educated, they are also supporters of English.

The politicians on the other hand were in favour of education through mother tongue. In order to bring a change in the colonial education system a national conference was convened in November 1947 in Karachi in which 'uneasiness' was expressed "about the use of English as the medium of instruction" (Muneer Ahmad 1997:242).

Federal Education Minister expressed his view in favour of Urdu as the "lingua franca of Pakistan". In the first meeting of the Advisory Board of Education (7-9 June 1948) it was agreed that the mother tongue should be the medium of instruction at the Primary stage but the board left the question of the place of English to be determined by the Inter University Board.

In the mean time rumour spread in East Pakistan that 'Urdu alone was to be the language of the state'. It stirred the anti-Urdu sentiment
among Bengali-speaking people of East Pakistan. "The language question came to the forefront in July 1947, only a month before the creation of Pakistan, when Dr. Ziauddin Ahmed, Vice-Chancellor of Aligarh Muslim University, declared that Urdu would be the medium of instruction in Pakistan. Dr. Shahidullah, a Bengali linguist, replied to this by saying that: 'if Urdu or Hindi instead of Bengali is used in our law courts and universities that would be tantamount to political slavery'" (Tariq Rahman 1997: 89).

Just after independence the Tamaddun Majlis an organization of Dhaka demanded Bengali as (a) the medium of instruction; (b) the language of the courts; (c) the language of the administration and (d) the language of the mass communication in East Bengal. Moreover, they wanted to be one of the 'national languages of Pakistan along with Urdu.'

The people of East Pakistan were greatly shocked when they found that the currency notes, money order forms, tickets and other documents of the government were either in English or Urdu and Bengali had been ignored totally.

In the second session of the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan Mr. Dhirendra Nath Datta demanded a national status for Bengali as it was the language of the majority people. But it was simply turned down. The language movement was intensified in coming days. In March 1948 Mr. Jinnah, the Governor General of Pakistan came to visit Dhaka. He declared Urdu as the sole state language of Pakistan. It was strongly opposed by the student community. The Central Pakistan Education Advisory Board's recommendations regarding Urdu script for all Pakistani languages including Bengali added fuel to fire. "Such a move again prompted sharp reaction among the students of the Dhaka University" (Rafiqul Islam 1994: 47). An attempt to reform Bengali in light of Islamic ideology was seen as
an effort "to create a new fangled Bengali different from that of West Bengal" (ibid: 49).

While the Bengali language movement was gaining momentum Khwaja Nazimuddin now the Prime Minister of Pakistan again declared that Urdu alone would be the state language of Pakistan. At this, State Language Committee of Action was formed in East Pakistan and 21 February 1952 was declared the State Language Day.

On that fateful day 144 was imposed banning strike, gathering etc. But thousands of students of Dhaka city gathered in the Dhaka University on that particular day. They came out of the campus in small batches defying 144 for courting arrest. At first the police resorted to lathi-charge, tear-gas and finally to firing causing death of many students. But instead of calming down, the movement turned violent and for the next few days a reign of terror was let loose.

On the 23 February a martyr column known as Shaheed Minar was raised near Dhaka Medical College where the first student of the movement fell to police firing.

At last in 1956 Bengali was made one of the state languages of Pakistan. As a result of the movement “a new taste was created, and a new standard of cultural judgement was set up...the nation was not the same after that day, for it had gained a new sensibility, baptised in fire” (Sirajul Islam 1994: 40-41). “The event (the language movement) influenced the future of the country in such a way that it became an abiding source of inspiration. It gave us all a sense of unity and an undaunted courage to break the shackles of bondage. The Liberation Struggle in 1971 was a natural follow-up of what happened in 1952” (M. Harunur Rashid 1994: Foreword).
In the field of education in East Pakistan it brought a change. Bengali became the medium of instruction up to the Matriculation and English lost its monopoly and consequently its teaching-learning was weakened. But in the context of Pakistan as a whole, the importance of English increased in the coming days. During the reign of Ayub Khan, English enjoyed special favour. He was a stern supporter of education through English medium. As the Commander-in-Chief he founded many public schools and Cadet Colleges to produce efficient military and civil officers. But at the same time efforts were also made to change the medium of instruction from English into the national languages up to Matriculation and Intermediate level because of student movements. But "these were merely cosmetic changes because entry to the most prestigious jobs was still facilitated by English" (Tariq Rahman 1997: 236). Consequently a number of English medium schools were coming up as "the elite of wealth (feudal and tribal lords, business magnates etc) and the elite of power (the military and bureaucracy) made arrangements to facilitate the entry of their children into the same stratum of society by elitist schooling, while professing to create equal opportunities for all through vernacularization" (ibid: 323). The same thing was also expressed by Ryburns. He says:

By the beginning of the twentieth century the association of English with power and position had become firmly established in India. It was necessary if one was to improve one's position, if one was to escape from grinding that poverty that has been the lot of fathers and mothers (Ryburns 1940: 104).

In the Cadet Colleges the use of English was encouraged at the expense of all Pakistan languages and 'the use of vernacular was not allowed in the training institutions of officers corps'. Thus the language of internal use at least among the officers remained English (Tariq Rahman 1997).
In short all the governments of Pakistan before 1971 were pro-English in policy and action, though they favoured national languages at the rhetorical level. The pedagogical norm remained British standard English and English Literature was the main focus of English studies in most of the universities.

“One major change which has occurred in the eighties is that English language, English-language-teaching (ELT) and linguistics have begun to be taught in addition to the main stream of English literature” (Ibid: 79).

So it is obvious that upto 1970 English teaching in Bangladesh during Pakistan period was, essentially teaching of English literature and grammar alongwith translation.
1.4 TEACHING OF ENGLISH AFTER THE EMERGENCE OF BANGLADESH IN 1971

English in Bangladesh is a colonial legacy. It has been there for more than a century and a half either as a second language or as a foreign language. But whatever may be its status, its importance more or less has always remained the same there. Since the time of its introduction, it has acted as a great force for social mobility and a ladder for reaching a high social status and economic gain. Though the land called Bangladesh underwent three major political shifts (British, Pakistan and Bangladesh periods) the advantages of learning English have remained almost the same. The English-knowing educated class like in the past (e.g. British and Pakistan periods) continue to be privileged in the present Bangladesh. It is an undeniable reality that the status of English as well as its standard of teaching - learning has undergone radical changes with the emergence of Bangladesh. Before independence English was a second language but with the birth of Bangladesh in 1971 it was reduced to the status of a foreign language overnight.

The territory known as Bangladesh is essentially a monolingual one though there live a good number of tribes in some hilly areas of the country. But they have near-native competence in Bengali. This is why Bengali is the common language to interact with the people of different linguistic communities.

Politically the newly formed government of Bangladesh in 1972 was under heavy moral obligation and tacit pressure to instal Bengali in state machinery in place of English as a bounden duty to the martyrs of 1952 Language Movement. So the constitution of 1972 declared Bengali as the state language of Bangladesh. Thus this declaration brought about a remarkable change in the status of English in the country. But interestingly
no legal steps were taken to implement this vital constitutional procedure into effect. As a result the status and functions of English remained undefined for a long time.

Previously English was the language of the government, of law and of higher education. All public transactions, sophisticated conversations and scholarly discussions and legal interpretations were in English. "The English language had acquired a unique position in Bangladesh region without being the first language of almost none of the population. The first language of the community was Bengali. The status changed with the constitutional declaration of Bengali as the state language of Bangladesh in 1972. That declaration became effective when the Bangla Prochalon Ain - 1987 (Bengali Implementation Act of 1987) was passed in the Assembly. Since the time-old status of English changed, a number of status related complications arose, a situation which needs a definition of a new status for English" (Musa Monsur in BAFOLTA, vol. 1; no. 1; 1997: 7.)

Soon after independence the government of Sheik Mujibur Rahman after assuming power in 1972, directed that Bengali should be used in official work. Mr. Eusuf Ali, the Education Minister said on 8-2-72 that Bengali should be used in all walks of life.

Many quarters, however, complained that Bengali was not used in offices. In 1975 Sheik Mujibur Rahman issued a circular directing all to use Bengali in place of English in government offices. On 12 March he again issued another circular asking all the concerned to preserve all the government documents in Bengali. This direction was also applicable in communication with foreign countries, foreign embassies and missions. It was also directed that English translation of the Bengali document would be enclosed while communicating with any foreign officials.
During Zia's time the officials were also further warned that violation of this order would be liable to punishment. All these notifications came out in the press on 13 February, 1979.

During the Pakistan period a lot of blood was shed to establish Bengali as one of the state languages of Pakistan. So it was naturally expected that in free Bangladesh Bengali should be treated as more important than English.

All these events led to a weakening of the status of English. As a result of this, a chaotic situation arose in the government official circles as such a change of status of English was rather sudden and without any reference to the requirements of language planning.

"According to Rubin (1983:4) language planning is deliberate language change based on the identification of a language problem. There are two dimensions to language planning - status planning which changes the function of various languages within a society and corpus planning which is undertaken to develop a language so that it can have functions in a society. Corpus planning can include such things as expanding the vocabulary of language, determining a standard of usage or developing a writing system. These two types of planning often occur together since decisions which alter the status of a language, can also necessitate some type of corpus planning" (Sandra Lee Mckay 1992: 3-4).

According to Conrad and Fishman (1977) when a language is designated as an official language "it is typically used by a government for its internal operations, for such function as recording laws, conducting parliamentary proceedings or operating the courts" (ibid: 4).

When a country decides to upgrade an indigenous language to the status of an official language other than a language of wider
communication or to replace a language like English by a native one, corpus planning may become essential to standardize and modernize it in order to make it suitable for different purposes.

In 1930 several East African countries agreed to work together to standardize and modernize Swahili so that it could be used as the language of education. For the scheme to materialize an East African Swahili Committee was formed. It selected Zanzibar dialect of Swahili for standardizing and promoting through the region. It involved standardizing the orthography, controlling the publication of dictionaries and standard grammars, securing uniformity in usage and syntax and translating selected books into Swahili (Eastman cited in Mckay 1992: 4).

In case of Bengali no such plan was adopted. So when the constitution of Bangladesh declared Bengali as the state language in 1972 and the government was threatening that the failure to use Bengali in state affairs would be dealt with a heavy hand, a state of confusion and chaos in official circle was the result. Most of the offices made a mess of both Bengali and English because before them there were no proper guidelines about the use of Bengali. At that initial stage the officers and clerks did not have appropriate Bengali technical terminology. They were used to work with English which had been in use in education, courts, government offices, trade and commerce and other branches of public life for more than a hundred and fifty years. To change such a well-grounded language with the stroke of a pen without making alternative effective arrangement (proper language planning) must meet with failure. This happened initially with Bengali in Bangladesh. If a study of the official documents of Bangladesh between 1972 and 1987 is made, a peaceful co-existence of English and Bengali will be found in the same file. The notes and comments in a file were in English but the signatures were in Bengali. The
situation was like - monolingualism in principle but bilingualism in practice. This happened due to lack of language planning.

The diglossic nature of Bengali also created much trouble in the official circle. Bengali has two standard varieties - 'Sadhu' (purely literary form) and 'Chalita' (both literary and spoken standard). At the beginning the officials were confused as to which one was to be used. Then the government clarification came favouring the 'Sadhu' variety. This also created some problems as "Chalita' was the language of mass media and education. The officials were usually accustomed to using the 'Chalito' in their day to day life. So there appeared a peculiar mixture of both the 'Sadhu' and the 'Chalita' in the same file.

Language planning involves three processes - determination, development and implementation. 'Determination involves initial decisions regarding what language policies to implement in terms of the functions of given languages within a country and of the development of the language itself; development entails the elaboration of the means to achieve the desired outcome and implementation is the actual attempt to bring about the desired goal" (ibid: 5). In Bangladesh only 'determination' was there in the initial stage and the other two processes eg. development and implementation were absent. As a result though Bengali was declared as the state language of Bangladesh, practically, English continued to play the role of the official language.

In addition to this, some other factors were also related to the language change. Economic ability and technological facilities are also associated with it. When Bengali became the state language, it became necessary to replace the English printing press and type writers by Bengali ones. The clerks who were ignorant of the use of Bengali type writers needed to undergo intensive training. All this needed heavy investment.
The newly independent war-torn Bangladesh did not have the financial resources to meet the requirements. All these factors were ignored while making the declaration. As a result it was not practically possible to bid fare-well to English although efforts were made in this direction. In this connection it may be mentioned that in education sector efforts were also made in the past to replace English by Bengali. So the status of English as a medium of instruction in the whole of Bengal region has been questioned time and again. Earlier English education was not an easily available resource. Some bright Bengali youngmen took the challenge of learning English in spite of great difficulties.

"They learned English and cultivated Bengali and in the process became famous in the community. Most of the great Bengali scholars for the last two hundred years have been English educated. The English-Bengali bilingualism affected the Bengali language intensely and healthily. English has always been the intellectual input of the Bengali intelligentsia, the output was always in Bengali" (Monsur Musa in BAFOLTA, vol.1. no.1, 1997:13).

Sir Jogadish Chandra Bose, Raja Ram Mohan Ray, Profulla Chandra, Chitta Ranjan Das, Subash Bose, Rabindra Nath and many others were the giant products of English education. This is one side of the coin. There is other side of the coin too.

"Ramendra Sunder Trivedi, a scientist and a philosopher, wrote papers on the consequences of English learning. He considered that English language enriched the knowledge pool of a Bengali but it failed to make him an original thinker. He preferred education in the first language. So did Tagore, the great poet. The primacy of mother tongue education has been a strong theory in Bengal education circle. The English language was considered a burden for the community and hence its status was questioned time and again. Even today an English learner suffers from fear and insecurity. The distribution system of the language seems to be the cause of these fears and insecurity.....This fear is not the result of any intrinsic aversion for the language itself. In most cases the fear of the language arises from the past failures and the
dread that it is a subject in which a student is most likely to fail in the future as well" (ibid: 13).

In the context of present globalization every student of Bangladesh is aware of the importance of English. And they are also interested to learn it. But learning is not taking place. This sad state of affairs of English in our institutions has been stated by Prof. Sadrul Amin very aptly. He says:

".....in a country like Bangladesh, despite all out efforts on the part of some teachers, there is hardly any student -learning. The education system, social-economic conditions of the people and political unrest are mainly responsible for it. Besides the faulty testing principles which put emphasises on the power of memorization, not on learning and the unbridled scope to adopt unfair means in the examination are sufficient reasons for the students to be passive and indifferent towards the learning or acquisition of English.

.....In Bangladesh the level of proficiency attained by most of the students even after ten to fourteen years of formal learning of English is far from satisfactory. All learners with the exception of a negligible percentage, have neither linguistic attributed nor communicative competence in English worth mentioning. The deplorable standard may be accounted to the fact that English having lost its status of the second language no longer enjoys its past cachet in our society. Most learners in the Secondary and Higher Secondary stages are not aware of any need for English other than passing of examinations. Despite the limited 'instrumental motivation', and rather non-existent 'integrative motivation' there should not be any excuse for the disappointing out-come of English Language learning if we consider the years of formal education the students have had” (Sadrul Amin in BAFOLTA, vol.1, no.1: 39-40).

According to him, for most students, learning English is simply a waste of time money and energy. The political unrest, lack of proper pragmatic education policy and absence of any well-defined ELT/ESL curriculum are, he thinks, behind the present dismal state of English.

Prof. Anwarul Haque (1989) is of the opinion that the standard of English has declined during the last two decades owing to
i) the absence of a well-defined foreign language policy,

ii) failure of the government to check the deteriorating trend of English,

iii) literature oriented language teaching and

iv) the acute dearth of competent teachers of English.

He also points out the following reasons of high standard of English in the pre-independence Bangladesh:

i) the medium of instruction was English,

ii) the quality of teachers was much better than that of the present ones.

iii) the motivation for learning English was very high,

iv) there was great competition among the learners.

This is why students acquired a very good competence in English even through the Grammar-Translation Method at that time. Finally he says that language experts of today's world have discarded the system of teaching-learning through words and rules of grammar in isolation. "But we have been clinging tenaciously to it. The result has been disastrous. This is why the vast majority of our learners fail to attain a minimum proficiency in English even after exposure to it for 10 to 12 years. Those who become proficient, do so at their own personal initiative. The existing system has really very little to offer except encouraging uncomprehending role-learning" (Anwarul Haque in BOLTA Vol.1, no.5, 1989:23).

Another feature of English in Bangladesh is the mushrooming of English teaching schools popularly known as kindergartens. This kind of special schools have divided our society. This sentiment is voiced by the
great educationist Prof. Zillur Rahman Siddiqui. He expresses his great concern about the harm done to our society by so-called kindergartens. He is worth quoting in this respect. He says

"In comparison with this private system of Primary education, the government Primary education is poor, unattractive and non-productive. The children from the poor class usually receive their education in government Primary schools. As a result, with the passage of time the gap between the rich and the poor is getting widen day by day. It is so to say a kind of injustice to the poor class whose offspring cannot stand in competition with their affluent counterparts. As a result of these two opposite directions in Primary education, the principle of equal right to education is violated here" (Z.R. Siddqui 1994:49).

Similarly some very costly private universities have come up for the rich where the poor and lower middle classes have no access due to the exorbitant fees. Here the medium of instruction is English and ELT is taught by specialists.

This system of private education has become a threat to our national unity and has disintegrated the society. As a result of these institutions English has not only been reestablished in higher section of the society but has also been given high prestige. Though English is seen as a prestige language, the teaching learning of it has gone down alarmingly. The poor state of English in our education can be attributed to the absence of EFL/ESL curriculum and detailed syllabuses for different levels for giving clear direction to the teaching - learning of English. Our teachers of English are not dedicated to their profession. According to Anwarul Haque there is a great dearth of "a corps of dedicated teachers specialized and trained in modern methods of English language teaching. Most of those we have at the moment are not English language teachers in real sense of the term. They cannot be blamed for that because we are yet to develop a system of education and training which can produce such teachers" (Anwarul in Haque in BOLTA vol.1, no.5, 1989:22).
In the mid seventies a circular was issued from the Ministry of Education banning English as a medium of instruction up to Higher Secondary level. Similarly, in the early eighties the University of Dhaka and the University of Chittagong with the exception of Rajshahi University with which all the degree colleges of the country were affiliated, issued circulars making English, which had been a compulsory subject at degree level, an optional subject.

These decisions of the ministry and universities along with the government proclamation of making Bengali as the state language heavily weakened the teaching-learning of English. As a result the standard of English went down to an alarming level. At the same time English has lost its previous prestigious status in the national context.

Prof. Mosur Musa (1997) has identified the following three major factors responsible for the changed status of English.

"i) Nationalization of administration.

ii) Vernacularization of education.


(a) The history of the sub-continent points out that with the change of ruling class, the language of the administration also changed. When the Muslims took the power from the Hindus in India, Persian became the language of administration. And when the British took the throne from the Mughals, English superseded Persian and became the language of the new government. After the emergence of Bangladesh the war torn country did not have the required resources to replace English by Bengali. This is why it was not practically possible to make the shift from English to Bengali
overnight. But the Bangla Procholon Ain - 1987 (Bengali Implementation Act of 1987) was a concrete positive step in this respect. Because it made the specific line of demarcation between the scopes of the use of Bengali and English.

(b) It is a fact that education is a civilizing force. So emphasis has been laid on it time and again. In 1953 the UNESCO in one of its monographs gave a permanent sanction for vernacular as a medium of instruction. Because the foreign language medium is the unnatural way of imparting knowledge. According to many, such non-native medium would make students 'so much unoriginal, so much unimaginative, so much lethargic'. The sooner, it is replaced, the better for the real development of the country.

Another factor also acted in favour of replacing English by Bengali. The rich literary tradition of Bengali was looked upon as sufficient asset to become the medium of instruction. "There is no denying the fact that in Bangladesh today studies upto H.S.C. level can be done to a large extent in Bengali because of the greater availability of some text books in Bengali but at the Honours level barring a few language subjects, vast majority of textbooks as well as reference books are in English" (Anwarul Haque in BOLTA vol.1, no.5, 1989:24).

(c) "The concept of colonial rule emerged with the political development of twentieth century Europe. The nationalistic realization of the idea was that subcontinental life-pattern was distorted by exogenous forces. So the behaviour and values transmitted through the colonial process must be removed to enhance a new life style pattern in society. The new life-pattern demands new communication symbols. Therefore vernacular can be the only vehicle of communication in political, economic and educational domains of the society. Thus English gradually continues
to lose its status in the society" (Monsur Musa in BAFOLTA, vol.1, no.1, 1997:14).

In the mean time opinions in form of letters were coming up in the press highlighting the need for English in different stages of the social life. So in January 1989 the government came out with a definite proposal about English.

According to the declaration, English will be included as a compulsory second language in the curriculum from class I to XII. It also clarifies that there is no need for the inclusion of English as a compulsory subject at degree level. But the National University of Bangladesh which controls tertiary education of all the affiliated colleges has made English a compulsory subject for both Pass and Honours courses from 1996.

The decision of the government about English deserves a logical analysis in the socio-economic context of Bangladesh.

To teach English from class I sounds well. But the success of the scheme depends according to Monsur Musa (1995: 239-291) on the following conditions:

i) There is well-organised administrative infrastructure.

ii) There must be adequate financial resources to give English education to lakhs of Primary children throughout the country.

iii) There is a sufficient number of qualified and trained teachers to teach English effectively.

iv) There should be guarantee of the timely supply of adequate books.

If the above conditions can not be ensured, the whole scheme of imparting English education from class I is bound to end in a fiasco. It will
add to our drop outs. We should also consider seriously whether all children from both urban and rural areas necessarily have to be bilinguals in the socio-economic set-up of the country. It should also be taken into account whether our students have truly opted for English. In this respect Badar Uddin Umar, a left-oriented thinker in his book - Bhasha Andolan O Onyanya Prashanga (Language Movement and Other Related Topics 1999: 58) says that it is not really necessary to pursue the present policy of imparting English education to all because it is turning into a burden for them and the method which is used for the purpose over a long period is simply a waste. He further says that English should be imparted to them who really need it and the modern method of foreign language teaching should be adopted in teaching English. Monsur Musa (1997) also thinks that it is much better to be well-educated than to be inadequate bilinguals.

Some people are of opinion that if a section of the population is given English education, they can translate the knowledge treasured in English into Bengali. But this is not a wise idea because "the horizon of human knowledge is expanding so fast that by the time the books are translated the contents are likely to become obsolete, the gap in technological knowledge can hardly be filled up by relying solely on our mother tongue. English can easily bridge this gap. That is a great advantage of knowing English" (Anwarul Haque 1989:25).

In the present phase of globalisation Bangladesh cannot live in isolation. We need English badly. English is an asset in the present world, but for students, with the exception of a small number, it has become a burden due to lack of proper foreign language policy, absence of competent teachers of English and of other related language teaching facilities.