Chapter-I
Introduction

1.0 Introduction

In this section, adequate background to this study of “Teaching Learning Practices in Engineering Universities of Bangladesh” has been presented as a rationale for this proposed research. Hence the section focuses on the status of English from global to local context, Native vs Non-Native English paradigm, English in South East Asia. This chapter addresses on the chronological history of English in Bangladesh. This chapter further addresses on issues like education system in Bangladesh with special reference to the higher education sector and the engineering/technical education in Bangladesh, current ELT practices in engineering classroom, English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and the nature of teaching materials used in English class in engineering universities in Bangladesh. This chapter has also brought out the significance of the study, statement of the problem, objectives, research questions and hypotheses followed by the scope and limitations of the study.

1.1 The status of English in the Global Context

In today’s world, English has truly become the most dominating global language and an undisputed lingua-franca as it plays an essential role in the area of trade, commerce, advancement in science and technology and very especially in the realm of higher education. It has also become the language for communication in sports, culture, knowledge and research with greater dominance in the world stage than ever (Reagan & Schreffler, 2005). European Union (EU) is trying to propose and implement a single-
language EU policy because every year EU has to spend more than one billion euros just for translating their official documents from European languages into English and hence the possibility of English supremacy on the continent is very high. These are a major part of the debate on the feasibility of Europeanization in general. EU legislation clearly states that the right to use one’s own language in both private and public life is inalienable. Yet in Europe and elsewhere the situation still stands, as phrased in 1995 by the Ombudsperson for Human Rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Gret Haller (cited in Phillipson, 2003), that “no one pays attention to what you say unless you speak English, because English is the language of power” (Phillipson, 2003). If left unmanaged, the economic and political havoc wreaked by the English-language hegemony could provoke a backlash of nationalism in Europe, destroying the hard-earned benefits of European unification.

However, reaction to the global spread of English is different among scholars. Crystal (1997) holds some neutral and diplomatic stand as he perceives the spread of English as ‘beneficial’ which ‘presents us with the unprecedented possibilities for mutual understanding’. However Crystal (1997) also supports sustaining local language, culture and heritage.

Some of the writers and scholars such as Pennycook (2003), Phillipson (1992, 1999) and Skuttnab-Kangas (1999) have not welcomed the absolute hegemony of English over other languages; rather they have defined the ongoing phenomenon of globalization as the one sided Anglicization. They have voiced against the issue of English language to be settled on uneven compromise with the local languages. Phillipson points out that the dominance of English is not naive as it is asserted and maintained by the establishment and continuous reconstitution of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages.
(Phillipson, 1992). Though the imposition and expansion of English use and English education under the colonial rule in a way opened many windows of scopes and opportunities, these outcomes have come as by product.

As we were not in a position to resist British’s way of imposing its ideas and ideologies on us and were not capable enough to read their farfetched mind, the least we could do was to protect and preserve our own local languages and its heritage. In this connection, Pennycook (2002) has made another reference in his observation that the global spread of English is under a postcolonial performativity framework. Pennycook (2002) argues for adopting a critical, historical and non-essentialist perspective that would contextually link the global and social inequalities with different forms of local appropriations and resistances. One manifestation of such performativity was the hybridization of language as a means of questioning the legitimacy of the inner circle English as the norm while also proposing alternatives such as World Englishes, English as Lingua-franca (Kachru, 1986, 1996 & Jenkins, 2006 as cited in Caine, 2008). There are many more to name who eloquently voice against this nature of hegemony of English over other contemporary languages but the spreading and expansion of English language is going further and further.

With the pace of time, spread of globalization, Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between many centres of excellence for higher education and among the corporate world, the innovation of science & technology, trade and commerce, the nature of this expansion and hegemony has been changed. As for now, the number of native speakers of English is approximately one quarter of the total number of people who speak and use English as their medium of communication for communicating with the non-native speakers. Now
thousands of books, journals, research articles and various pieces of literary works are being published by these non-native users in English. Since English is not their first language (L1), they belong to the outer circle of the world today. Not only that these contributions are being constantly winning awards and thus getting the recognition of the west who treat themselves as the authority of English language whereas the inner circle inhabitants are also constantly taking benefits from these writings. Therefore, in a way, the non-native speakers of English do not need any further recognition from the west i.e. the authority of English.

1.2 Native and Non-native English paradigm

The process of selecting a particular variety of English language as standard is an attempt that is not only linguistic but also based on many factors such as social, political and economic. In case of English, it is even more challenging to identify a standard variety as there is no regulatory body to define the standards of English language as in case of French Academy for French language. Therefore for many scholars such classification as native and non-native speakers or users entails much controversies and debates. Hence at present English language speakers and users are divided into two categories namely Native and Non-native speakers. According to Kachru (1992), the spread of English across cultures has two sides; one represents those who use it as their first language and the other who use English as an additional language to L1. In this connection, going against Quirk (1990 as cited in Takatsuka, 2008) – who is in favour of deficit linguistics whereas Kachru (1985)- a staunch admirer of liberation linguistics, calls for a paradigm shift towards plurilisation in standardization to keep pace with changing perspectives of the world by saying that ‘the
native speakers of English seem to have lost the exclusive prerogative to control its standardisation’. Hence putting aside this bifurcation of English users, the notion of world Englishes emerge where English language has given birth to so many branches of English such as British, American, African, Australian, West Indian, Indian and so many more to name. The implication is there is no one standard-English now and there are quite a many standard Englishes present in the world at present. Therefore a significant proportion of the world’s population uses English as its other tongue or second or foreign language. In the following section, the details of proportion of the English speaking population have been presented in terms of L1, and L2.

Having discussed the global diffusion of English and Standard English debate, the researcher now attempts to present the chronological history of English language in Bangladesh since the colonial history can provide some insights as means of introducing the readers with the context.

1.3 English in South East Asia

The holistic picture of English in South East Asia has been significantly manipulated by the way the British have injected their ideas in the psyche of people. Since the British rule, the public have felt that if by knowing the language of the masters they could bag a position in the job market; it has been worth adopting it. Today the situation has not weakened; rather it has become further intensified when it comes to hegemony of English. Today more than half a century after independence, a good command over English still provides numerous opportunities in a country like Bangladesh and today mastery in English language skills is considered key factor in almost all types of recruitment. Even today, anyone proficient in
English is treated as the most potential candidates for job market. Since our parents have also developed as well as adapted their mind set like that they send their wards to English medium schools, though most often it seems very difficult for them to carry on the educational expenditure. The same trend pervades all over South East Asia. Here people mostly learn English simply as an instrumental motivation for employment purpose. Being affluent in English language in this region means having the passport for global citizenship and any proficient English user with any degree will be sought after by the employers in the job market. Thus most of these local languages/ mother tongues are losing their value against the hegemony of English and its popularity in this region. The same picture is found in the private universities in Bangladesh which is sharply different from the public universities. As mentioned earlier, before the introduction of private university act in 1992, Bengali as a language reigned supreme in every sector in Bangladesh just because of the national sentiment in favour of mother tongue (Bangla). Now that the scenario in Bangladesh is also changing gradually as the private sector is growing faster against its government counterpart and thus people with a higher and better proficiency in English are sought after and welcomed in these sectors. Only very recently the public universities have started offering one full-fledged compulsory English course in all departments at the first year undergraduate level. This gives a signal that keeping oneself aloof from the neighboring and global trend will further push them backward as a nation. In conclusion, one can claim that the British rule has completely changed the mindset of people long back but now the global popularity and hegemony of English has made it more difficult to resist the change. Hence it seems people have already given up and let themselves floating with the current gesture.
In Bangladesh, most of the prestigious private universities and other MNCs still look for candidates to recruit with foreign degrees, of course the intention is very clear; better proficiency in English. This scenario remains the same across South East Asia.

According to Rahman (2001, as cited in Kamran, 2010) who endorses the following view in the Pakistani context:

“English is still the key for a good future – a future with human dignity if not public deference; a future with material comfort if not prosperity; a future with that modicum of security, human rights and recognition which all human beings desire. So, irrespective of what the state provides, parents are willing to part with scarce cash to buy their children such a future”. (Rahman, 2001, p. 243 as cited in Kamran, 2010)

From here onwards, the researcher shifts his focus towards the usage and users of English worldwide.

1.4 Frequency of English speakers Worldwide and its Usage in Bangladesh

English is a global language spoken and taught in many countries both as a native and as second or foreign language. It is taught in schools, colleges and madrasas worldwide. This is a living and vibrant language spoken by over 350 million people as their native language. Besides, millions of people speak it as a foreign or second language. It is estimated that more than 300 million people speak English as a second language, and about 250 million people use it fluently as a foreign language. In addition to that, about 1000 million people around the globe have more or less knowledge of English. It is taught almost everywhere in the world because knowledge of English is considered as an international passport in terms
of communication with the entire world. In Bangladesh, it is considered as a carrier of
prosperity, a tool of acquiring knowledge and as a sign of sophistication. In Bangladesh,
English is taught as a compulsory subject in schools, colleges and madrashas from the
primary to the tertiary level (Bachelor degree). English is taught as a foreign language in
Bangladesh (Open University Publication, English Unit-1, 19).

1.5 Chronological History of English in Bangladesh

The shape at which English language exists in this part of the world has its eventful history.
The chronological history of English in Bangladesh has political as well as social
background, which influences the teaching learning of English at every level of education.
The following section therefore elaborates upon the various phases of this development.

1.5.1 English in Bangladesh during Colonial Period

The history of English in Bangladesh goes back to the time when East India Company from
Britain arrived in the Indian subcontinent in 1600. The language policy of the colonial
power in British India was based on Lord Macaulay’s Education Minutes of 1835. This
policy aimed at forming “a class who may be interpreters between us (the British) and the
millions we (the British) govern, a class of persons Indian in blood and color, but English in
taste, in opinions, in moral and in intellect” (Macaulay 1835, cited in Aggarwal, 1983).
Macaulay’s minute stratified the society in terms of people’s attitude to English. Macaulay
in his minutes in 1835 stressed the importance and necessities of the education that would
be given to the natives through the medium of English. He identified some objectives of
such education which were designed to serve the interest of the master, not that of the
subjects.
Thus, the primary objective of teaching English in the Indian subcontinent was to produce a class of people having the tastes and outlook of an English man. The objectives of teaching English are thus very clearly defined. Gupta (1970 as cited in Aggarwal, 1983) says, “The colonizers attempts to prove that English language, culture, literature and people are superior to anything, and this was the primary purpose of introducing English as the medium of instruction and as a subject of study in the educational institutions” (Aggarwal, 1983). The Hindus mostly welcome the inclusion of English considering its utilitarian and instrumental value while the Muslims mostly takes it as a threat to Islamic religious education (Hossain & Tollefson, 2007). Actually the motives of the British are to block the creative and thinking potentials of people, so that they can continue ruling further. In the colonial period, the seed of English, sown in a casual manner, has its full blossom towards the very end of their rule. It has begun with the need to meet the commercial needs, and reached the extent of meeting the demands of employment, enlightment, scientific and technological advancement, political identity and modernization. In a way, the rulers are not the only stakeholders to blame; the listed pundits and educated people such as Raja Rammohan Roy and others of his stature have easily been succumbed to their prey and thus they have started popularizing English among their fellow countrymen. Now it has been discovered by the revolutionist historians that Rammohun Roy had a very positive liaison with Macaulay (Krishnaswamy, 2002).

Beside these, During the British colonial rule, English was the instrument and language of the colonial power. It has been the medium for the colonial administration, education and commerce since then. The English language bears the testimony as vehicle of progress and
enlightenment of the western variety. Thus, it has become the common means of communication between the rulers and the educated class of Indian subcontinent. English retains that position till the partition of India. The story of English language proceeds during the later years of the colonial rule by establishing some illustrious universities in Kolkata, Bombay and Madras in 1857 and Dhaka in 1921. The motive behind establishing these universities is also the glorification of English in this subcontinent. Whatever the reasons, their ideology of imposing English on the people is different because the intention of the rulers and the ruled can never be the same. Hence the controversies regarding English and English education continues.

1.5.2 English in Bangladesh during Pakistan Period

In 1947, when the British colonial rule came to an end and the Indian sub-continent was divided into India and Pakistan on the basis of religious parameters; the Muslim dominated part of Bengal became part of Pakistan (later renamed as East Pakistan, and still later as Bangladesh). English continues to occupy a significant position in government activities, education, trade and commerce during the Pakistan regime as well. English has become the only vehicle of communication between the people of the then East Pakistan (Bangladesh) and the then West Pakistan (Pakistan) as a protest of the Bengalis or hatred towards Urdu which has been a language of even a very few West Pakistanis. It has been used widely in government, legislatives, debates, courts and higher education. English enjoys the status of a second language and is taught as a functional language in secondary schools and Madrasahs in Pakistan (Curriculum Committee 1962).
Though the contestation of English with regional languages of Pakistan continues on religious grounds, the greater tension exists between Urdu and Bengali speakers. Bangla has been the native language of more than 57% of the total population of Pakistan while Urdu is spoken as native language by only 3.5% of the total population of Pakistan (Thompson, 2007). Hence, the background of such tension is quite evident here.

When Urdu was made the national language, there had been agitation and strikes in East Pakistan demanding for Bangla to be the national language. Thus “the numerical strength has not determined the ‘majority’ or ‘dominant’ language in Pakistan (Mansoor, 2004: 61)”. The unrest resulted in police firing into a students’ procession in East Pakistan, killing three students and two passers-by on 21st February 1952. Consequently the Language Movement-1952 led to the acceptance of Bangla as one of the two state languages of Pakistan along with Urdu. The movement began in 1948 and reached its peak through the sacrifice of many lives and finally Bengalis achieved their mother tongue as their state language. The Bengalis’ extreme patriotism towards their mother tongue is further established as 21st February has been observed as the Martyrs Day to commemorate the language martyrs in Bangladesh since 1952. As this issue of language movement started getting recognition worldwide, UNESCO passed a resolution on 17th November 1999 to observe 21st February as the International Mother Language Day worldwide every year.

This incident of people losing their lives for the cause of mother tongue has played a tremendous role in building secular Bangla mediated nationalism and it has also sowed the seeds for the subsequent successful war of independence in the early 1970s (Thompson, 2007).
Therefore, one can claim that Bengalese have gone through the most torturous and oppressive state of discrimination which in a way has made their nerves stronger and taught them the spirit to continue fighting against political and economic oppression. This nationalistic spirit added further linguistic sensitivity, and contributed to the formation of linguistic nationalism in their strongly positive attitude towards Bangla. The Bengalis being more sentimental and patriotic towards their own language is addressed in many articles and write-ups by scholars from national and international reputes (Baldauf & Hamid, 2008; Musa, 1996). Actually this section of the discussion is very vital since it lays the foundation for the principle behind so many language policies and education commissions which has left their impact on the ELT practices in Bangladesh since the liberation period.

During the Pakistan period, English has played a very crucial role in all spheres of society in Bangladesh. It has been studied as a compulsory subject in the secondary and post-secondary education, and is the medium of instruction in higher studies as well as extensively practiced in army, court and public administration.

1.5.3 English in Bangladesh (Post Liberation Period)

Economic disparity, discrimination in wealth distribution and socio-political repression has made East Pakistan (present Bangladesh) very discontented. Starting from the language movement in 1952 to establishing Bangla as a national language (Rahman at al., 2010 cited in Kabir, 2013), people of Bangladesh had to strive hard for basic civilian rights such as democracy and autonomy, equality in regional discrimination which turned into a war of liberation in 1971 (Zaheer, 1994). After nine months of intense war, Bangladesh finally
achieved independence though at the cost of the lives of many of its intellectuals, three million of its souls, destruction of infrastructure and education sector etc. Hence from the very beginning, this newly born Bangladesh inherited a scanty literacy rate of 17.61% of population from all ages (GoB, 2004a). Thus the wounds of liberation war are quite evident in every sector in Bangladesh. Therefore, all the language policies of independent Bangladesh have been influenced by the then nation-binding spirit of Bangla which has started from the pre-independence era and through the independence, thus culminating the solid foundation to establish Bangla as their state language and medium of instruction in the educational institutions.

Due to such intense struggle for a long period on many such nationalistic issues, it directly influenced language and education policy as Bangla has been declared the national language by drastically reducing the role and status of English. This phenomenon left its long term legacy on the English language teaching learning in Bangladesh even after forty years of independence. Hasan’s (2004) statement as Bangla being replaced by English in all official communications except those in foreign missions and armies, where English is still used as official language further validates the issue of language conflict. Simultaneously Bangla also takes the place of English as medium of instruction in the secondary and higher secondary levels of education but it remains as a compulsory subject throughout these levels. When the government of Bangladesh realized that introducing Bangla as medium of instruction proves to be inadequate, the government had to revise its decision and reinstate English as medium of instruction in higher education. Besides, the government had another motive behind reinstating English as the medium of instruction as there had been a constant
demand for efficient human capital abroad. In the meantime, there took place a mushrooming of English medium schools, mostly on private venture, particularly in the capital city and are specially meant to serve the advantage of elite minorities of Bangladesh. Since the government has not brought this English medium education system under any act, the school authority, mostly adopted Cambridge University Curriculum where there is no space for studying local language and culture. This resulted in the lack of proficiency among the learners in Bangladesh.

1.6 Education system in Bangladesh- A historical perspective

Education in Bangladesh has three major stages-primary, secondary and higher education. Primary education is a 5-year cycle while secondary education is a 7-year one with three sub-cycles: 3 years of junior secondary, 2 years of secondary and 2 years of higher secondary phases. The entry age for primary is 6 years. The junior secondary, secondary and higher secondary stages are designed for age groups 1-13, 14-15 and 16-17 years respectively. Higher secondary tier is followed by tertiary education in general comprising of sciences, arts and commerce, engineering and technology, agriculture and medicine streams requiring 5-6 years to obtain a Master’s degree after their 3-4 years graduation.

1.6.1 Higher Education in Bangladesh

For the first time, a decision has been taken in favour of English, when ‘The Private University Act, 1992’ is passed in the Parliament to allow the establishment of private
universities where the medium of instruction is English. According to the latest updates from Ministry of Education (MoE), there are around 85 private universities in Bangladesh (BANBEIS, 2014). These universities have been established to meet the growing demand of educated human capital with high proficiency in English. Hence students studying in these private universities have a high proficiency in English than their government counterpart. The reason is that the private universities pay more attention on enhancing the English language and communication skills of their students and thus offer adequate number of courses at different levels in their four years of education program. In sharp contrast, the government universities offer at best one to two courses to enhance English language skills of these learners in the case of which learners’ L1 strongly dominates English (L2)- the current medium of instruction in these universities. Thus as a result, the private university graduates are better equipped in terms of prospects in the job market, especially in the Multi-National Companies (MNCs) where a sound proficiency in English is always on the driving seat (Hasan, 2004: section 1.2.4).

1.6.1.1 Present Profile of Higher Education in Bangladesh

Higher education in the public sector is a legacy of the British colonial education system. Traditionally, universities are treated as the pinnacle of higher education. At present, there are more than 122 universities (UGC, 2014) in Bangladesh of which 37 are public/government and the 85 are private universities. Of the public universities, 10 are general universities, five are engineering, three are agricultural, five science and technological and one is university of arts and culture, one affiliating university having more than thousands of colleges under its supervision and one offering education on distance mode. The number
of students and teachers in these public universities is around 182317 and 9634 respectively, excluding those in the affiliated National University and Open University offering distance education. The number of students in these two universities is more than 800000 and 450000 respectively in the year 2004-05. Thus at present, more than 1.8 million of population receive higher education in Bangladesh of which 71% is male and 29% is female. The male–female ratio of teachers in the government universities in Bangladesh is 82% and 18% respectively. The number of students and teachers in the 85 private universities in Bangladesh is 257089 and 6204 respectively. Among the students in private universities, around 74% is male and 26 % is female; of the teachers in private universities in Bangladesh, more than 30% are female and around 70% are male teachers (BANBEIS, 2011).

Higher education facilities in the public universities are spread over the entire country, so that students of different regions can avail of higher education without much struggle. Hence there is at least one public university in each administrative division of the country. Since the earlier scenario of the private universities is mostly found in the capital and no interested parties are found to establish private universities outside the capital, the regional learners have not had the privilege to obtain education under private universities. But this time, especially the present government has made it mandatory to establish private universities outside the capital and in and around the district level so that students from across the country can receive education from private universities as well.

1.6.1.2 Structure of Higher Education in Bangladesh

There are five tiers of higher education as classified by the current education policy in Bangladesh. These are: (1) General Education, (2) Science & Technology and Engineering
Education (3) Medical Education (4) Agriculture Education and (5) Distance Education. In addition, the higher education sector also provides Vocational and Madrasah Education. In Bangladesh, higher education consists of a 3 year graduate Pass-Course programme or a 4 year Honours programme for a bachelor’s degree. For the Pass-Course graduates, the masters program is of two years whereas for the honours graduates, the masters programme is one year respectively.

The number of public universities has also increased significantly since the independence of Bangladesh. Following are some of the key features of these public universities as observed in the recent years:

- Enrollment rate has increased over periods
- There has been an expansion in the number of faculty in the universities. The teacher-student ratio, on average, has remained the same. The teachers now-a-days are more qualified and there has been more research publications by the university academics now than before
- The expansion is mostly quantitative whereas the quality of education has not improved much
- In general, higher education is highly subsidized. In absolute term, the extent of subsidy has been increasing over time
- In the last decade, the share of university allocation to total education reveals a see-saw trend with, however, a decreasing trend for the last five years or so
- The teacher-students ratio in public universities is about 1:18 (UGC: 2006)
- The employee-students ratio reveals interesting trend. Against teacher-students’ ratio, employee-students ratio is 1:5 on the average (UGC: 2006), BANBEIS (2011)
Public universities are the first and foremost choice of the majority of students seeking higher education. This is for various reasons. First, these universities offer wide range of subjects in Science, Arts, Commerce, Liberal Arts, Humanities, Engineering and Technology, Law, Education and Medicine disciplines. Secondly, public universities attract the best brains and researchers as teachers although monetary compensation for them is anything far from attractive. Thirdly, library, laboratory, internet and research facilities are much better in the public universities than anywhere else in the country. Fourthly, seminars, symposiums, workshops, debates, exhibitions and visiting teachers’ lecture series are often held in these universities with a wide scope for national and international exposures for promising young knowledge seekers. Finally, residential and boarding facilities at low subsidized rates are also available in these public universities.

1.6.1.3 Present context in Technical / Engineering education in Bangladesh

At present, there are 37 government universities, out of which, five are purely engineering universities and five are universities of science & technology. These universities offer engineering education ranging from undergraduate courses to PhD in different branches of engineering. The following are the universities which have been considered as the sites for this present study:

- Bangladesh University of Engineering & Technology
- Dhaka University of Engineering & Technology
- Chittagong University of Engineering & Technology
- Rajshahi University of Engineering & Technology
- Khulna University of Engineering & Technology
These universities provide engineering education in the areas such as Mechanical, Electrical, Civil, Computer Science, Urban Planning, Architecture, Industrial Production, Chemical engineering and so on. Besides, there is another stream known as technical/vocational educational program that offers Diploma in relevant engineering programs. The main objective behind this education stream is to develop workforce or technical manpower and make them employable for national as well as international requirements which are part and parcel of the national education policy-2010. The following section focuses on the issue of teachers training and education in the institutes of higher education in Bangladesh.

1.6.1.4 Current ELT practices in engineering classroom

The present English syllabus (Appendix-VIII) very clearly reflects its general nature through the various contents included in it. The existing instructional techniques also demonstrate much the same. Teachers simply come to class and teach the topics as to prepare them for the exam. Even the learners also think that their primary objective is only to pass the examination. There is almost no practice of skills development; especially there is no practice of communication skills among these engineering learners at all. Besides, without having a prescribed textbook, neither the English teachers nor the learners are aware of their future aims, objectives and their career relevance to these topics. Therefore, the existing teaching practice is very much of a traditional one without the use of multimedia/projectors, ICT in English language class. These engineering learners mostly need to prepare themselves with a sound command in all the four major language skills along with grammar and vocabulary. Besides, they also need lots of practice in developing their presentation skills and to participate in group discussions and debates. They also need
to prepare themselves to successfully face an interview in their real life. Unfortunately there is no such scope for all these soft skills within the existing resources. The same scenario is mostly common to all the engineering universities in Bangladesh. Whatever these learners are doing to improve their English language proficiency is only because of their own endeavor; not from the university resources.

1.6.1.5 Teacher Education in Bangladesh

Teachers along with their teaching materials and inputs constitute the backbone of any successful educational programme. One of the many such formats of teaching context is English for Specific Purposes (ESP) which perfectly matches the context in which English teachers in engineering universities work. English teachers in Bangladesh at the level of technical, vocational and engineering institutions are very scarce and they are not much aware of the concept and approach of ESP pedagogy. However, due to the similar and relevant context of the situation prevailing in these educational institutions, the English teachers teaching in these universities are considered as ESP teachers for the present study. These ESP teachers in Bangladeshi context are all university graduates having completed their Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts in English. Surprisingly there is no English teacher to represent with a Bachelor of Education or Master of Education degree in these engineering universities in Bangladesh. Though there are a number of teachers’ training and teachers’ education institutes for the primary and secondary school level teachers, there are only two institutions providing the teacher education for tertiary level teachers in Bangladesh. The first one is the Institute of Education Research (IER), University of Dhaka, is aimed at producing teacher trainers for the primary and secondary level of
education whereas the second one; the National Academy of Educational Administration and Management (NAEAM) which is primarily meant for preparing teachers for higher education context. Unfortunately only the higher secondary level teachers avail of the services and training from this training institute.

Teaching English in such technical and vocational contexts requires them to teach and increase awareness of ESP courses. This adds further difficulty since these teachers do not have any training on teaching ESP courses. In fact, there is no recognized pre-service training on ESP courses, nor it is integrated in the English (B.Ed) program at the university level. Teaching ESP course in engineering context has not yet been recognized as an area of training by any of the government universities in Bangladesh. In addition, there is no recruitment criteria required for appointing the English teachers requiring specialized skills in the technical, vocational and engineering institutions in Bangladesh. The basic prerequisite that the university looks for recruiting a candidate is to have an academic degree in English; either it’s from literature or language. In Bangladesh, teachers join their profession even without getting some orientation or guidelines about this responsible profession.

The picture does not much change even during the service life as the teachers are left without access to in-service training opportunities. In case of the engineering universities, it is taken for granted that the English teacher has nothing much to contribute except completing the prescribed syllabus. Hence they are unable to upgrade their knowledge about the current trends of teaching general English and ESP in particular.
Usually teaching ESP has been classified under the umbrella of ELT. It usually takes place in various ESL and EFL settings. Although teaching ESP exploits general ELT methodology, it has its own distinctive features and underlying principles as well. A typical ESP teacher’s role is to analyze students’ needs, outline objectives, adopt suitable learning materials and adapt them according to their required level, design lesson plans and conduct assessment and evaluation. These are the six aspects upon which Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) figure out the ESP teacher’s professionalism and adopt the term ESP practitioner, designer, materials provider, collaborator, researcher and evaluator. Materials design is one of the most required training areas in ESP and hence constitutes the essential means for initiating any teachers training, as Hutchinson and Waters (1987) point out that “materials can play a very useful function in widening the scopes of teachers training, by introducing teachers to the new techniques.” Though the following might be the usual issues, skills and activities that the English teachers need to be aware of to be successful in carrying out ESP instruction, in an ESL context like Bangladesh, the situation of ESP still has distinctive connotation that should be taken into account prior to any future in-service provision for teachers of ESP:

- Lack of awareness of ESP among the English teachers
- Teachers depend mainly on the old grammar-translation approach
- Most of the lessons and activities are written texts, reading comprehension exercise, reading aloud, rigorous grammar drills
- Classroom interaction is done more in L1 and less in L2
- Teaching does not reflect teachers’ professional development and training
- Almost no use of information technology in class
• Needs analysis has not yet been identified as criteria upon which teaching of ESP instruction is built up. Hence the Needs are neither applicable to the students nor to the teachers

• Lack of what Strevens (1977: 145) calls general education criteria upon which the aims and objectives of teaching ESP course can be determined. Students’ profile remains an inadequate source for setting up more effective aims and objectives

• Lack of ESP resources through which teachers can practice selection and adaptation of teaching materials as there is no textbook assigned in these engineering universities

• Teachers’ proficiency in English is never up to the standard; teacher’s background, experience and higher educational qualification play a critical role in his / her proficiency to conduct ESP instruction

• Since most of the teachers are from English literature stream, they lack confidence in teaching ESP and especially because of the lack of awareness about scientific, technical and vocational background, they feel uncomfortable to teach ESP

1.6.1.6 English for Specific Purpose (ESP) in Bangladesh

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is defined as an approach to teaching and learning of English language that clearly serves the purpose of learning which is a very new but a growing and promising discipline in Bangladesh. Put simply, ESP learners are usually much aware of their needs, ESP course, its content, learning purpose and its immediate application. As most of the English teachers in the technical/ vocational and engineering educational institutions are not aware of this specialized instructional approach that always focuses on the learners’ goal, the ESP in fact exists in ailing state in Bangladesh. If one takes a close look at the nature, contents and aims and purposes of many English courses in operation in many educational institutions like medical colleges, engineering universities, polytechnic and vocational institutions in Bangladesh, it becomes evident that though in
some cases there exists some cases of ESP syllabus; in practice and implementation, it is almost non-existent. Of course, the course contents may not be in proper shape due to the ignorance of English language teachers. Besides, the dismal picture of ESP in Bangladesh is also due to the lack of adequate experts in this newly grown area of specialized teaching. There is no infrastructure to train these newly recruited English teachers who step into the tertiary level ESP classroom as a novice without any professional training. In contrast, the private engineering universities never offer modern needs based, job oriented courses for many educational major programs where ESP has a very sound existence as the private university management always tries to keep on track with the international advancement in the educational infrastructure. Private universities usually send their teachers for specialized training and professional development abroad.

Due to these and many other reasons related to teachers’ lack of awareness of ESP courses, lack of professional development program, absence of specialized training programs for ESP teachers, ESP in Bangladesh is still in its infancy. As a consequence, students, after completion of their degrees from these engineering, technical and vocational institutions, cannot reciprocate the performance that is expected of them both in academic and professional contexts. Since performance in ones’ professional setting is a direct reflection of his/her exposure to academic input, Bangladesh University Grants Commission (UGC) has realized the significance of this very academic need which is very important for the students to understand and appreciate the texts only in English. Besides, UGC of Bangladesh has also offered at least one compulsory English course irrespective of all disciplines with an aim to enhance students’ comprehension and better understanding of the subject specific texts; put simply, to improve their study skills in English. Most of these
English courses are more or less of EAP; that too of English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP) in nature.

Hence, very recently, UGC of Bangladesh has taken a timely initiative of making English for Academic Purposes (EAP) as compulsory subject at undergraduate level in all Government Universities in Bangladesh from 2015 onwards under the title ‘Transforming English Language Skills in the Higher Education Sector in Bangladesh (TELSHEB) Project’, subject to the approval of the Academic Council of the respective universities. To make this project a success, UGC has already collaborated with British Council, Bangladesh (BCB) and together with university teachers in Bangladesh and consultants from Canterbury Christ Church University, UK. The first phase of work has already started since 2013 to design materials to strengthen English Language Skills in Higher Education in Bangladesh.

In this regard, a baseline Needs Analysis survey on the current English Language teaching learning practices and the use of English as a medium of instruction in the Higher Education sector in Bangladesh has already been conducted in fifteen different Bangladeshi Government and Private Universities (general, technical and specialized ones) as well as in colleges under the National University from all geographical regions of Bangladesh. Based on the findings and recommendations of this rigorous Needs Analysis survey, four modules have been developed that serve different goals and learning purposes at various levels perceived by the students and the teachers. Once, the training of EAP teachers is over, they are meant to develop more skilled and trained manpower from various universities to teach these modules as compulsory EAP textbooks in all universities in Bangladesh.
The four modules are namely: “English for Academic Purposes (EAP-1)- General” through which learners’ Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing (LSRW) skills are to be enhanced. Once EAP1 is successfully over, learners are to be offered with “EAP2” as to enhance their essay and report writing skills. In the third phase of the master plan, “English for Employability” has been included to introduce the specific skills, topics and areas where students should improve to satisfy the requirements in connection to career needs. The last of these modules is that of Professional Development (PD) for Teachers through which EAP teachers will develop their professional expertise and will simultaneously apply the newly acquired skills and expertise in class. As part of this endeavor, first of all, experts from British Council, Bangladesh (BCB) have selected quite a many English teachers, specifically, the ELT teachers from different universities teaching at least at the undergraduate level with a view to developing them as ESP teachers; henceforth EAP trainers. From the above framework, it can be easily understood that since the survey conducted in all types of universities including technical, general and specialized ones, it may not fulfill to exactly serve the engineering learners’ specific needs, goals and wants which are usually different from learners from different sciences and general education background. The section to follow will focuses on the nature of EAP/ ESP teaching materials used in English class in the context of engineering universities.

1.6.1.7 Nature of Teaching Materials used in English class

As mentioned earlier, there is no prescribed English textbook for these engineering universities in Bangladesh. Therefore, different English teachers use different teaching materials and hence there is no uniformity among the English teachers when it comes to using teaching materials. These learners mostly rely on rote learning which clearly reflected
in the type of examination paper attached in the Appendix--IX. Hence the uniformity of teaching materials is important among the English teachers, otherwise the learners suffer during the semester final examination. Besides, these English teachers are also not trained enough to design their own teaching materials. Hence they pick up the teaching materials from the traditional grammar and composition books available in the local market written by the local writers as they find it easy to execute their responsibilities. To summarize, the nature of teaching materials used for teaching English among these engineering learners in Bangladesh are purely of general in nature and hence they do not reflect any academic or professional relevance for engineering learners. This is the main reason that the English classes and teaching materials do not substantially motivate the students to benefit from English classes resulting in their poor English language proficiency at the end of the academic year.

1.6.1.8 Existing Syllabus and Evaluation System in the Engineering Universities

The existing evaluation system in all the engineering universities of Bangladesh necessarily follows the credit system. The credit system is one of the latest and most popular evaluation system adopted in almost all higher education institutions across the world. Usually in case of the engineering universities in Bangladesh, all the theory courses offered across the semesters are of three types; two-credit, three-credit and four-credit courses. A two-credit course means two-hour class duration per week and likewise, for a three-credit course, three hour class duration and four-credit course, four hour class duration per week is allotted. However, most of the laboratory/ sessional courses offered are of 0.75, 1.5 credits. In case of laboratory/ sessional courses, 0.75 credit means 1.5 hours and 1.5 credit means 3 hours and 2 credit means 4 hours class duration per week respectively. Apart from this,
these universities have adopted a semester-wise evaluation system in place of the age-old year-end examination system. An academic year comprises of two semesters. Therefore, a four-year engineering program comprises of eight semesters. All the theory courses for technical and science subjects except Mathematics have a parallel laboratory/ sessional courses where the students attempt to apply their theoretical knowledge. Though, in most cases, all the Departments offer only one theory English course in English, very few Departments offer an English laboratory course along with the theory course. Hence in terms of application, the courses offered every semester are of two types; theory and laboratory/ sessional/ practical courses. Students are supposed to complete at least 140 to 160 credits across the disciplines as it varies from branch to branch. The proportion of theory and laboratory/ sessional courses is 60-40 ratio.

To take an example from Mechanical engineering, DUET, where a maximum of 11 credits of Humanities course offered which is equal to 6.88% of the whole 160 credits allocated for the award of B. Tech degree in Mechanical Engineering program. It is worth mentioning here that a meager 11 credits of course-load is being further distributed among five different related disciplines such as English, Economics, Management, Accounting, Sociology and Industrial Law making it almost non-existent.

The students are assessed based on both the internal and external assessment procedures. The assessment for all theory courses is done out of 300 marks which is equal to 3 credits, including both internal and external value. Out of this total credit, 10% is allocated for attendance, 20% of the credit is allotted for internal assessment that comprises the students’ formative evaluation to be assessed through mid-term examination, class test, quizzes, spot
test etc. The rest 70% of the whole credits is left for semester final examination to be conducted out of 210 marks at the end of the semester, which is really a rigorous task for students to cover this portion of syllabus for final examination. Though all the laboratory/sessional courses are under internal assessment procedures, 70% load of external assessment for the semester end examination does not necessarily test what it is supposed to test. Therefore, the sole purpose of this assessment procedure is to encourage their practice of rote learning. Hence what matters most for the students at the end of the semester is a good percentage of marks/grades.

There are ten categories of letter grades adopted for evaluation in these universities. The following table presents the concept of grade used for final evaluation in the engineering universities of Bangladesh.

Table:01- Letter Grade system in the engineering universities of Bangladesh

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Numerical of Grade</th>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Grade Point</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>80% or above</td>
<td>A+</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75% to less than 80%</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>3.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70% to less than 75%</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65% to less than 70%</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60% to less than 65%</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55% to less than 60%</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>2.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50% to less than 55%</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>2.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45% to less than 55%</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>2.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40% to less than 45%</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 40%</td>
<td>F (Fail)</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Though there are so many criteria and categories of grades for evaluation, due to the allotment of 70% of credits for the semester final examination, it shows that the existing evaluation system encourages memorization and rote learning instead of knowledge and creative development of students.

The following section sheds lights on the current educational policy-2010 as implemented in Bangladesh to bring in the possible changes in the educational sector; especially in the sector of higher education.

1.7 Key Features of Education Policy-2010 as Implemented in Bangladesh

The government of Bangladesh takes the initiative to frame an Education Policy at par with the needs of the recent requirements for building the future generation as an effective human capital such as resourceful in knowledge and well equipped with the use of technology and motivated by moral and ethical values, national customs and traditions and the spirit of nationalism. The current education policy takes it as priority to incorporate the aspirations of our independence led by the Father of the nation-Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. To carry forward the commitments in the Electoral Manifesto (2008) to build up Bangladesh as a state free of poverty, communalism, religious terrorism, liberalism and democracy, Ministry of Education (MoE) has formulated this National Education Policy (NEP, 2010) headed by National Professor Kabir Chowdhury in 2009. To form a new education policy, they reviewed the education commission reports from 1974 up to 2009. As Hoque (2012) states, the policy has included totally 24 goals and objectives emphasizing on morality, creativity and production oriented education, technical and vocational education, inequity regarding gender, religion and ethnicity, Information and
Communication Technology (ICT) and math-science, and indifferent curriculum and syllabus for all streams etc. The brighter aspects of this Education Policy are that, it emphasizes on secular religion, science and technical education and it does not promote terrorism and fundamentalism through traditional religious education. The committee has tried to reshape the religious subjects in line with modern and scientific thoughts leading towards career orientation.

Many education experts in Bangladesh suggest that due to the lack of awareness against Religious and Ethnic intolerance and terrorism, the socio-economic existence suffer from illiteracy, superstitions and the out-dated mindset which emerges from lack of proper education. To alleviate these problems among the people, the National Education Policy (NEP-2010), has incorporated a number of social, democratic, environment, basic right, human rights, terrorism and inclusive education issues which have already been implemented since 2013.

Hence the review of the education policy-2010 and its key features as observed by Hoque (2012) suggest that from the spirit of liberation, one can find socialism, democracy, secularism, Bengali Nationalism as the philosophical basis of Bengali nationhood. In addition to this, neo-liberalism, pragmatism, utilitarianism have also been incorporated as the core of philosophical basis of the Education policy of Bangladesh. Socialism as an economic system as well as a political movement based on materialist and scientific outlook, mainstream of positivist paradigm has been reflected in this policy. This policy document has all the features of an egalitarian educational policy. With a legacy of colonialism, Bangladesh inherits few renaissance values, of which, secularism is aspired
one from the inception of nationhood. Hence the researcher believes, one must not disagree that the current education policy is purely eclectic in nature as it has incorporated all the positive essence of curriculum ideologies and models available today.

Hoque (2012) further observes that the current education policy has addressed significantly on including ICT in classroom from primary and secondary level onwards, more training for teachers’ professional development. It has especially emphasized on technical education, its dissemination across the country establishing new polytechnic institutes, Leather and Textile Institutes. However, the policy has not specifically addressed anything on language and communication skills for engineering students since these skills ultimately proves very vital in their professional life. Apart from this, it has not captured the issues like ESP instruction in any form in these specialized universities.

However, the current education policy has also been criticized due to its contradictory attention drawn from both socialism and neo-liberalism. According to many educationists, the current education policy -2010 recommends for promoting both these ideologies which is seemingly impractical as the former ideology promotes free education sponsored by Government whereas the later promotes more privatization; exactly the two opposing ends. The present education policy has also recommended for self-sponsored education beyond class-XII in Bangladesh. Besides, public universities have also been asked to generate their own funds exploiting the existing resources.

1.8 Significance of the Study

Various studies in the areas English teaching learning practices in technical, vocational or engineering context across the globe reveal that there are various types of gaps between the
needs and wants of students versus that of the teaching learning practices in these institutions. There are potential gaps between the industry needs and the academics in these universities in terms of both the academic and professional skills and requirements. Hence this study is very significant as it attempts to address those potential gaps in a bid to make these engineering graduates employable in the twenty first century global market and thus improve the existing pedagogic practices by incorporating those gaps.

Therefore, it is high time that these learners’ specific academic needs as well as their future professional needs need to be identified and addressed in the existing English curriculum with adequate priority, so that these learners while leaving the university would be confident in their English communication skills.

Hence the purpose of this research is to study the English language teaching learning practices in government engineering universities in Bangladesh and identify the weaknesses of the existing English pedagogy and curriculum practices and offer suggestions to rectify these areas based on the findings of the research. Therefore, the current study bear immense significance as the findings of this study would be highly useful in building engineering students’ career either in the country or abroad.

1.9 Statement of the Problem

English language teaching learning practices in government engineering universities of Bangladesh always remain an area outside the main stream English teaching in Bangladesh. However, the government sectors and the potential corporate employers either the local or multi-national companies look for certain employable skills and abilities among these engineering graduates to succeed in their professional life. One of those criteria is good
communication skills in English; usually the onus for inculcating such skills is on the English teachers and their pedagogic practices in these engineering universities. Apart from this, the content subject teachers also keep on blaming the English teaching for their engineering students’ poor English proficiency and communication skills, more in particular in their academic affairs. Since there is no textbook prescribed for these universities, both the teachers and the students lack proper guidelines on how to develop their skills and abilities required to succeed in their academic and especially in their respective profession that keeps on changing every day in terms of the recruitment procedures and the required skills. In addition to these, the existing English syllabus seems quite irrelevant to the engineering learners needs and desires when it comes to their target / professional needs. This problem further intensifies when one can notice that most of the English language teachers are from literature background along with no professional experience or pre-service training. To add further, English teachers are least aware of the students’ disciplines and their interest and they use the old fashioned teaching materials which are not specifically prepared for them and hence, these students significantly lack positive motivation towards English class. Therefore, it is quite evident here that there is a significant gap between the needs of the students and the existing teaching learning practices in English. Due to all such burning issues, the present study attempts to identify all these gaps and suggest measures for necessary modifications and changes.

1.10 Research Objectives of the Study

Hence following are some of the research objective formulated for this study:
• To identify the strengths and weaknesses of the current English language syllabus in the government engineering universities of Bangladesh

• To explore the current English language curriculum transaction practices employed in the engineering universities in Bangladesh

• To explore the nature of the teaching materials used in these engineering universities in Bangladesh

• To identify the potential gaps between the expectations of the students of the engineering universities with respect to English Language curriculum and the employability skills required by the industrial sector/corporate world

• To explore the nature of the current evaluation/assessment system in these universities in Bangladesh

• To explore how Bangladeshi engineering universities prepare the English teachers for ESP instruction

• To identify the reasons for the lack of motivation among engineering students’ towards English class in the engineering universities of Bangladesh

• To identify the reasons for the lack of positive attitude among students in Government engineering universities of Bangladesh towards English class

To achieve the above mentioned objectives, the researcher has formulated the following research questions.
1.11 Research Questions

(01) What are the strengths and weaknesses of the current English syllabus? Does the syllabus adequately address the employability skills for engineering students in Bangladesh?

(02) How far the teaching materials used in English class in engineering universities of Bangladesh relate to the students’ learning purpose and career needs?

(03) Do the English language teaching learning practices in Government engineering universities of Bangladesh bridge the gap between students’ career needs and industry requirements?

(04) What is the nature of the current evaluation/assessment system in the engineering universities of Bangladesh? How far does the existing evaluation system motivate the students in their academics?

(05) To what extent do Bangladeshi engineering universities support the professional growth of English teachers for ESP instruction?

(06) What are the reasons for the lack of positive attitude towards English class among students of engineering universities in Bangladesh?

(07) What are the reasons for the lack of motivation among engineering students’ towards English class in the engineering universities of Bangladesh?
1.12 Conclusion

This chapter deals with range of issues such as historical background to the study, the status of English in global context, native and non-native English paradigm, English in South Asia, English speakers worldwide, chronological history of English in Bangladesh starting from Colonial to Post-independent Bangladesh. This chapter further focuses on the education system in Bangladesh, especially on the higher education and technical and engineering education in Bangladesh. It also discusses the current ELT practices in the engineering classroom, the teacher education in Bangladesh and especially the ESP instruction, nature of teaching materials and existing evaluation system in the engineering universities of Bangladesh. In addition, this chapter has focused on the key features of National Education Policy-2010. Finally it discusses the significance of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study and research questions formulated for this study. In the next chapter, the researcher tries to address the review of related literature to capture an idea and direction for this current study.