Chapter-Six

Findings, Conclusions and Suggestions

6.0  Introduction

In this final chapter of the study, the researcher is going to discuss the findings, conclusions and suggestions. The present study tries to project findings and answer its research questions based on the eight important domains related to English language teaching learning practices in the Government engineering universities of Bangladesh. Hence the following discussion attempts to domain-wise triangulate the major findings of this study based on the analysis of data collected through various research instruments.

6.1  Attitude towards Learning English

The study revealed that the engineering students in Bangladesh possess positive attitude towards learning English. Ironically, reasons like conventional teaching methods, irrelevant English syllabus, unprofessional transaction of syllabus, and lack of professional training among the English teachers are not fostering the positive attitude of the learners.

Almost all the teachers expressed during the interview that they design and select interesting teaching materials and use them along with audio-visual aids in class to develop and exploit the students’ positive attitude and motivate them towards the English class. Surprisingly the findings from the Classroom Observation do not support their answers. The researcher has also observed that the teachers do not use any interesting and relevant teaching materials and whatever meager and irrelevant materials they use, they are not presented in an organized fashion.
6.2 Motivation for Learning English

Students’ and teachers’ questionnaires and Classroom Observation prove that the irrelevant English syllabus, the curriculum transaction, lack of interesting and authentic materials are some of the reasons for the demotivation of engineering students towards English class.

6.3 English Syllabus

Students, teachers, HR personnel and In-service engineers anonymously feel that the present English syllabus in the Government engineering universities of Bangladesh is irrelevant and does not prepare the students for their future professional roles. Teachers have expressed that though the syllabus revision takes place every three to five years, no English teacher is made a part of syllabus modification and decision making. In most of the cases, the modification and reframing of syllabus is done by the Deans and Heads of engineering disciplines who have no knowledge of the students’ and industry needs related to English language and ESP curriculum.

It is pathetic to note that there is no English textbook for these students of these universities in Bangladesh.

6.4 Teaching Methods and Learning Preferences

The study proved that the teachers use only lecture method. They lack classroom management and time management skills. It is observed that they do not review the previous day’s lessons and do not practice the introduction-middle-conclusion strategy in class. The teachers state that large class size, lack of time and resources, limited infrastructure are some of the reasons for adhering to lecture method. It is also proved that
the English teachers are not familiar with the scientific and engineering genre and discourse system.

When it comes to learning preferences, students prefer more number of practical sessions which train them in necessary language skills and other skills like group discussion, oral presentation, technical report writing skills, etiquette etc. Classroom observation brings out glaringly the lack of professional training among the teachers which is very essential for them to fulfill the learning needs of the students.

6.5  Teaching Materials and Inputs

Though the teachers claim that they use some reference materials from books and other online sources students do not find them interesting and useful. The Classroom Observation made it clear that the teachers do not use any authentic materials and only few of them rarely use online materials and audio-visual aids. Even the materials chosen by the teachers are not relevant to the engineering domains. This is leading to lack of professional communication skills among the engineering graduates and thereby making them non-employable.

6.6  Existing Evaluation System

Analysis of the question papers brings to light that they lack validity and reliability on various grounds. They test the rote memory of the students and do not have scope to test their creativity and innovation. The kind of knowledge that the question paper aims to test clearly shows that the teachers lack professional training. The question papers further reveal that they do not test the professional skills required by the industry.
Both the students and teachers state that there is no balance between the weightage of internal and external assessment. This leads to further dissatisfaction among students and making them lose confidence. Both the teachers and students strongly feel for a thorough review in the existing evaluation system.

6.7 Potential Gap between the Expectation of the Students and the Reality they receive from the University

Students have expressed that the syllabus, teaching materials, methods of teaching, credits in English course, evaluation system, and teachers’ expertise should help them to develop good professional communication and employability skills. These are also the needs of industry. Unfortunately none of these needs and requirements have been fulfilled.

The interview with the In-service engineers reveals that the language skills they need at the workplace have never been taught to them during their academic life. They have further expressed that better language skills would have made them smart and efficient professionals.

The HR professionals also have expressed that lack of such professional language skills is making the present Bangladeshi engineering graduates non-employable in the 21st century industries. They have further revealed that though the newly recruited engineers of their organization possess sound technical skills, their lack of necessary English language skills is putting their career at risk.
6.8 Teacher Education/Preparation

The study revealed that most of the teachers are inexperienced and lack professional qualifications needed to teach English. Almost all the teachers are from literature background and hence are not aware of ELT/ESP instructional techniques. The findings also suggest that engineering universities neither make pre-service training as pre-requisite for entry into profession for the language teachers nor make an attempt to provide in-service teacher training. These teachers are never encouraged nor motivated for professional development measures by these Government engineering universities of Bangladesh. Students’ expectations of the teachers and the classroom observation and interview with teachers make it clear that the English teachers failed in discharging their responsibilities due to lack of professional training.

6.9 Answer to the Research Questions (RQ)

The present study titled “English Teaching Learning Practices in the Engineering Universities of Bangladesh” has the following research objectives:

- 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 of Bangladesh
- To explore the nature of the teaching materials used in these engineering universities of 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 these above-mentioned objectives, the researcher tries to answer the research questions formulated as a part of this study. The following section tries to answer the research questions.

*RQ-01: What are the reasons for the lack of positive attitude towards English class among students of engineering universities in Bangladesh?*

Answer to RQ-01: The study proved that students’ positive attitude towards English class is not properly nurtured. Lack of textbooks, irrelevant English syllabus, conventional teaching methods, lack of funding and infrastructure, lack of professional training among the teachers, imbalanced credit system, faulty evaluation system are some of the reasons for the lack of positive attitude towards English class among the students of engineering universities of Bangladesh.
RQ-02: What are the reasons for the lack of motivation among engineering students’ towards English class in the engineering universities of Bangladesh?

Answer to RQ-02: The above said reasons create a huge gap between students’ and industry’s professional communication needs and English language teaching learning practices prevalent in these universities. Hence the students lack motivation towards English classes in the engineering universities of Bangladesh.

RQ-03: What are the strengths and weaknesses of the current English syllabus? Does the syllabus adequately address the employability skills of the engineering students in Bangladesh?

Answer to RQ-03: The existing syllabus does not adequately address the employability skills of the engineering graduates in Bangladesh. Apart from this, the syllabus does not possess anything that is required to fulfill the aims and objectives of teaching English to the engineering students.

RQ-04: How far the teaching materials used in English class in engineering universities of Bangladesh relate to the students’ learning purpose and career needs?

Answer to RQ-04: The teaching materials used by the English teachers are inadequate to develop the needed language skills among the engineering students. At the same time, they do not relate to their learning purposes and career needs.

RQ-05: Do the English Language teaching learning practices in Government engineering universities of Bangladesh bridge the gap between students’ career needs and industry requirement?

Answer to RQ-05: The English language teaching learning practices in the Government engineering universities of Bangladesh do not, in any means, try to bridge the gap between the students’ career needs and industry requirements.
RQ-06: 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 towards academics?

Answer to RQ-06: The current evaluation and assessment system in the engineering universities of Bangladesh is very traditional in nature and does not evaluate the language skills required by industry. As it encourages only the rote memory of the students, the evaluation system has utterly failed in motivating the students towards learning English language.

RQ-07: To what extent do Bangladeshi engineering universities support the professional growth of English teachers for ESP instruction?

Answer to RQ-07: These engineering universities do not support the teachers for their professional growth and training in ESP instruction. In addition, the Departments also do not have enough resources to support the Continuous professional development of the language teachers. The university authorities do not even possess positive attitude towards English teachers’ professional development. Above all, the university statutes stop such initiatives on behalf of the teachers.

6.10 Suggestions for further Reforms

The suggestions have been furnished according to the major domains and areas of the study for further reforms.

6.10.1 Suggestions related to Teaching Materials and Material Designers

- There should be prescribed textbooks for English in the engineering universities
Material designers should include ESP materials for engineering English in the textbook/materials.

Teaching materials should clearly reflect the technical learners’ goals, needs and learning objectives.

Teachers should develop awareness about the teaching materials related to learners’ specialized field.

Teachers should be given professional training on how to design, adapt and implement ESP materials in class.

Teachers should develop expertise in using authentic materials in class.

Teaching materials should be designed around engineering learners’ needs and should be relevant to their respective branches.

There should be a platform for communication between English teachers and textbook writers/material designers.

6.10.2 Suggestions related to Teaching Methods and Learning Preferences

Traditional teaching methods should be replaced with updated modern methods and techniques of ESP instruction.

Teachers need to be trained in methods and techniques of English language teaching.

Teachers should develop awareness of exploiting the limited resources available.

Teachers should develop expertise in integrating LSRW skills.
Teachers should be aware of ESP instruction approach

They should be able to inculcate technical writing skills among the students

Teachers should include mock professional practices such as group discussion, oral presentations, interview skills and meeting etiquettes in English class

Teachers should give special focus on technical vocabulary and communication skills along with grammar and structure

Teachers should address the industry needs and prepare the students accordingly

6.10.3 Suggestions related to Syllabus/ Course design

ELT experts should be involved in monitoring, designing and revising the English syllabus

Needs analysis has to be conducted and syllabus has to be designed accordingly

English Syllabus should be strengthened in terms of credits and extended up to third year

There should be more language laboratory credits/courses to provide application oriented practice to the students

Syllabus should be flexible to provide teacher as well as learner autonomy

Syllabus design should involve industry experts and their feedback should be taken into consideration while designing the syllabus
6.10.4 Suggestions related to Evaluation System

- Current evaluation system needs to be revised
- External and internal marks distribution should be made into equal halves (50 weight to internal and 50 weight to external)
- Evaluation should be made objective in nature
- Evaluation system should give freedom to teachers to test students’ all round skill development in English language
- There should be scope to test students’ creativity in using English language for technical purpose

6.10.5 Suggestions related to Teachers Training and Preparation

- Pre-service teachers’ training should be made mandatory for teaching English in Engineering universities
- There should be an ESP teachers association in Bangladesh so that teachers practicing ESP meet at regular intervals and plan for their CPD
- There should be mandatory in-service training programme for the English teachers in engineering universities of Bangladesh
- English language soft wares, and other lab resources should be made available to the teachers
- Universities have to encourage and provide opportunities for English teachers to participate in CPD programmes
Due recognitions and increments have to be given to teachers pursuing CPD

6.10.6 Suggestions for University Authority

- Appropriate funding has to be allocated for developing language laboratory and procuring latest equipment needed for the laboratory
- Funds and resources should be provided for English teachers’ professional growth
- While recruiting the English language teachers, universities must insist on pre-service training on ELT
- Arrange induction programme and provide engineering field specific knowledge to English language teachers
- Arrangement should be made for in-service training for English teachers at regular intervals
- Strengthen the library resources with good number of books and journals related to ELT/ESP
- Encourage teachers to prepare and use authentic materials
- Involve English teachers in the syllabus design and revision

6.10.7 Implications of the Present Study and its Contribution in Bangladesh Context

The possible contributions of this study can be articulated in the following:

- Since there has not been any study conducted on the needs of engineering students, this study has a unique contribution to Bangladesh as it is the first of its kind.
- This study will help the English teachers to develop themselves into ESP practitioners in future.
This study will also help promoting the team teaching and cooperative teaching in ESP context in Bangladesh.

This study will lead to designing a focused and needs based English course which is absent at present.

This study will usher the possibility of MOU between universities and Industries in terms of developing English language skills needed for the engineering profession.

This study attempts to bring balance between internal and external distribution of credits. This will help improving the current subjective evaluation system.

The study will help the English teachers to develop professionally.

This study helps the universities in developing employability skills among the students.

6.10.8 Suggestions for Further Research

No single study is complete in itself. All researches open up new horizons for new thoughts and possibilities. New possibilities draw attention of researchers and thus further research continues from there onwards. Since the present study is on “English Teaching Learning Practices in the Engineering Universities of Bangladesh” which fits in ideal ESP context, it bears significant implications for future research in the field of ESP particularly in the context of engineering and technical education in Bangladesh. The implications for further research are furnished below:
The current study addresses the English teaching learning practices in the five Government engineering universities of Bangladesh. Henceforth research can be taken up on such issues in private universities of Bangladesh.

Research can be taken up on comparing the teaching learning practices employed by English teachers working in the Government and private universities.

Focused and in-depth study can be carried out on each of the various domains addressed in the current research for future research.

The area of teachers’ training and their professional development for the university teachers is missing in Bangladesh; research can be taken up on issues related to teachers’ professional development in Bangladesh.

In many sectors of education, there are lots of funding and resources available. These resources and funds do not reach and help the various stakeholders involved in education. Hence a rigorous needs analysis including all the stakeholders in the universities can be a major research topic in eliciting their needs.

Further research can also be conducted on the collaborative teaching between the subject teacher and language teachers to promote ESP instruction in the engineering universities of Bangladesh.

Course design and materials production can be another productive area of future research
6.10.9 Limitations of the Study

The present study has been carried out in the ESL/EFL context in the government engineering universities of Bangladesh. Therefore, this study cannot be generalized as a reference in general universities or private universities in Bangladesh. Nevertheless, this study can be a useful reference for English pedagogy in similar context anywhere in the world.