Undergraduates Expectations from the English Foundation Courses at Private

Universities of Bangladesh

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Degree of

Master of Arts in ELT (English Language Teaching)

Sharaban Tohura

Date of Submission: May 2016

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Submitted by:

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To My Family

Abstract

Universities play an important role in ensuring that undergraduates are equipped with language skills relevant to the workplace requirements (Singh, 2014). Every university offer English courses which are supposed to meet the language needs of the students (Chowdhury & Haider, 2012). The private universities offer basic or fundamental courses of English language to enhance the language proficiency of students, and it is important to identify to what extent the courses are fulfilling the needs of students. The study attempted to investigate the current nature of the English foundation courses that are offered in Bangladeshi private universities. The present study aimed to focus on how much the courses are meeting the students' needs for language competency. The present study explored students' expectations from the English foundation courses and the usefulness of the foundation courses. The main methodologies employed in this study were questionnaire survey and interview. Data was collected from 3 private universities located in Dhaka city. For the investigation both close and open-ended questionnaire was provided to 150 students and 6 teachers were interviewed. Theoretical framework was based on relevant researches by Khan (2000), Chowdhury (2009), Chowdhury & Haider (2012), Singh (2014) and De Silva & Devendra (2014).

The main findings of the study shows positive feedback from the respondents. The study provided some insights through the undergraduates' feedback. From the findings of the study it was identified that the existing condition of English foundation courses in the private universities are regenerating to cope up with the students' needs for personal improvement, academic success and for job purposes.

Acknowledgment

This thesis becomes a reality with the kind support and help of many individuals. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to all of them.

Foremost, I want to thank Allah for the energy he bestowed upon me, the strength, peace of my mind and good health in order to finish this research. I want to thank my parents for the way they have stood by me, believed me, and for all the things they have done for me.

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this dissertation is based on my original work except for quotations and citations, which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted to other institutions.

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This thesis has been approved and accepted for the fulfillment of the requirement of the Master of Arts Degree in ELT (English Language Teaching).

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List of Abbreviation

ELT- English Language Teaching

FC- Foundation Course

NA- Needs Analysis

UGC- University Grants Commission

EGAP- English for General Academic Purposes

EAP- English for Academic Purposes

EOP- English for Occupational Purposes

L1-Bangla

L2- Second Language

BCS- Bangladesh Civil Service

CHAPTER I

Introduction

1.0 Background:

English is now the most dominant language of the world and there is a renewed emphasis given on the teaching and learning of English in most countries of the world, and Bangladesh is no exception. In order to address this global demand of English, most private universities offer compulsory English Foundation Programs that are designed to give intensive training in English language. Every student has to take up these foundation courses during their first and second year of undergraduate program (Chowdhury & Haider, 2012). Most offer a foundation course in the first semester covering the basic components of the language, and more advanced courses in the second semester such as advanced writing, English composition, English communication skills, presentation and public speaking skills, report writing etc. The quality and effectiveness of the language courses offered to students who are aspiring to study different major subjects like Pharmacy, Computer Science Engineering, Economics, Law, Electrical and Electronic Engineering, Social Science and Business Administration in English medium universities appears to be a matter of great concern because of the far reaching impact they leave on the academic and professional endeavors of the students concerned. The future prospects of these students are mostly contingent upon their academic success at tertiary level. Such Fundamental English courses, therefore, must facilitate the kind of learning that ensures that the learners are placed in the best possible position to cope with the challenges of academic study as well as the typical language needs to be encountered in their professional domains.

1.1 Problem Statement:

In the case of Private Universities of Bangladesh, it has been noticed that same Foundation English courses are offered to different students from different disciplines. So there is a

question of suitability and relevance of the courses for the students of these universities when students of different disciplines take the same English courses. There is another question whether these English courses of these universities adequately prepare the students to function in accordance with their specializations. It is also obvious that there are aspects of these English courses, which are relevant to all students of different faculties. However, different faculties have their own specific English language requirements thus the English language needs of students vary. The need for developing specific English courses with specific syllabuses, therefore, cannot be underestimated.

1.2 Purpose Statement:

The study tries to evaluate the content and efficiency of the English foundation courses and shows the gap between what is expected and what is being delivered in the service courses by the private universities. The study attempts to identify the issues that are causing the students to utilize less of their English knowledge attained from their academic courses and implement it in their profession. The findings of the study may help the authorities who design English language course for the undergraduates in the context of their specific professional purposes, namely, "English for Computer Science" or "English for Lawyer" which can be specific to the field of computer science or Law disciplines of the university. The findings of the study may enable course designers to make informed decision on the students' English needs according to their discipline in the development of syllabuses and materials. The research might also help investigating the students' expectation from fundamental English courses. The English language instructors, who teach general English courses designed for the undergraduate students of all disciplines of the universities in Bangladesh, may benefit from the research as they may be better informed of the specific activities and skills in specific English language to teach and focus on the undergraduate students according to their specific disciplines.

1.3 Research Questions:

The study attempts to find out the efficiency of English foundation courses, it also addresses the following central research questions:

a) What is the nature of the foundation English courses that are offered in Private Universities of Bangladesh?

b) What do students expect from these courses?

c) And to what extent do the courses actually address the needs of the students?

1.4 Significance of the Study:

The present study is significant in depicting the present condition of the English foundation courses as it explores the nature and usefulness of the course in terms of fulfilment of the students' needs and demand. In our country, most of the private universities teach Basic language skills incorporating four skills. These courses are generally known as Foundation English or Basic English courses (Majid, 2006). These courses are compulsory for all and students have to attend the courses at the beginning of their studies (Farooqui, 2007). These courses give emphasis to teach all four skills and one of the main goals of these courses is to make the students competent in spoken English remembering that it has a high demand in job market (Farooqui, 2007; Majid, 2006). Majid (2007) observed that some of the speaking courses of our universities required the students to do presentations on several topics; students find this very useful in developing their oral skills. Interaction is also a very effective way to make the learners fluent in English (Majid, 2007; Alam, 2006). In order to provide learners with necessary support, it is essential to have an understanding of their perceptions, needs, expectations and their plans for language learning. The present study will attempt to provide answers to those concerns.

1.5 Delimitation:

For the data collection three private universities, located in Dhaka city were visited. The universities were chosen randomly. Convenient sampling was used for this study. There are multiple sections of English foundation courses in the private universities, two sections from each universities were randomly chosen.

1.6 Limitation:

The research has some limitations too, only three private universities are focused which are in the Dhaka city. Universities from other areas of Bangladesh are excluded. It is not possible to choose universities randomly, so selected universities are prioritized. The kind of research we conducted is time consuming also. Even teachers and students faced difficulty to give enough time to fill up the questionnaire. Since the questionnaire is designed to explore the students' needs and teachers' comment on the usefulness of the English foundation course, it seems that based on 3 private universities findings it is difficult to form a general remark. So, the result of this research would have been satisfactory if more number of universities were visited and class observation was included for data collection.

1.7 Operational Definitions:

The operational definition of the constructs used in the research is given below:

1.7.1 Foundation Course/Basic English/Fundamentals of English/Service Course

The language syllabuses in the private universities are based on students' need and are designed to develop learners' listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. These courses are taught as credit courses along with the core courses. The language courses assist the learners' to enhance their knowledge of English and also help them to communicate in this language.

1.7.2 L1 (Bangla)

Bangladesh is virtually a monolingual country where 95% of the populations speak in Bengali, there are other indigenous languages as well, for example Chakma, Marma, Mandi etc. In the present study, L1 refers to Bangla.

CHAPTER-II

Literature Review

2.0 Needs Analysis:

Needs Analysis is the process of identifying and evaluating needs in a community or other defined population of people. The identification of needs is a process of describing "problems" of a target population and possible solutions to these problems. A need has been described as: a gap between "what is" and "what should be." (Witkin &Altschuld, 1995). Need analysis (NA) focuses on the future, or what should be done, rather than on what was done as is the focus of most program evaluations. NA is a prominent feature and vital element in designing any ESP syllabus (Munby, 1978; Robinson, 1991). NA serves as the tool for identification and justification for an ESP course and helps identify the specific language needs that can be addressed in developing goals, objectives, and content for a specific language program. NA is not a be-all end-all activity rather it is a continuing process in which conclusions drawn are constantly checked and reviewed as Dudley-Evans & St John (1998) rightly put it "we need information that will help us select and prioritize" during the NA stage and when meeting with the target learners.

2.1 Status of English in Bangladesh:

English played a predominant role in Indian subcontinent due to the successful expansion of English language by the British colonial power (Rahman, 1999). After the partition of India the status of English remained almost the same in Pakistan because English was the chief means of communication between the people of East and West Pakistan, as a result English got the status of a second language in Pakistan. Rahman (1999) mentions that after the emergence of Bangladesh English achieved the status of a foreign language in the newly independent country. Since English is an international language it necessitates its learning to the

Bangladeshi people and this learning requires updated teaching of techniques (Hasan and Akhand, 2009).

2.2 The Emergence of Private Universities:

Until 1992 all universities in Bangladesh were in the public sector (Wahid, 2009). The government approved private universities under Private University Act 1992 on August 09, 1992. The Act had been amended in 1998 to improve and facilitate smooth functioning of the universities. In 2010, the Act was amended again on July 18, 2010. The Government enacted the act to fulfill the demand of the higher education (Siddiqi, 2010). According to the University Grants Commission (UGC) website (www.ugc.gov.bd), now Bangladesh has 37 public universities and 92 private universities. There are a lot of reasons which have given rise to Private Universities. Among them, the most important one is scarcity of seats in the Public Universities. The number of students passing intermediate examination cannot avail the opportunity to enroll them in the public universities. Those who cannot enroll in public universities, search for private universities. Quase (2007) says that with the establishment of private universities, a good number of students get opportunity for higher education in Bangladesh. For this, going abroad for pursuing higher education has reduced. One statistics shows that, after the emergence of the private universities going abroad for higher education has decreased by 40% to 50% (Quase, 2007). By the operation of these universities, foreign currency of a few thousand crore taka has been saved and brain drain also has been stopped (ibid). Private universities offer job market oriented academic programs and subjects like BBA, CSE, ECE, EEE, Pharmacy, BTE, English etc. (Rahman, 2005).The study environment of private universities is free of political influence (Azim, 2009). As there is no session jam, students can easily complete their academic study within the stipulated time. (Quase, 2007). In private universities, students get opportunity to get familiar with actual working conditions

(Chowdhury, 2005). They have to write reports, give presentations, and submit project assignments where teaching system is the combination of theory and practice (ibid). Besides these, every student has the opportunity to meet any individual teacher for any kind of academic purpose (ibid). Infrastructural facilities are available in almost all the private universities, like computer lab, library, multimedia projectors, OHP etc. (Quase, 2007; Azim, 2009). High tuition fees is the most negative aspect of the private universities (Azim, 2009). In this regard, Quase (2007) says that it is a misconception that the private universities are charging high tuition fees. He found the reason behind this. Most of the private universities have not got huge space like any other public universities. They have high-rated rented buildings and provide the facilities of air-conditioned classrooms, computer labs, resourceful libraries, and high salary for the faculty members. In addition to that, almost all the universities have the system of providing 10-100% scholarship for the students (ibid). Quase (2007) thinks that as the private universities do not get any kind of financial support from the Government or UGC, so they have no alternative way other than to charge high fees from the students. Bangladesh Government is paying TK. 45,000/= in a year for per student of a public university. On the other hand, private university students get nothing (ibid). This is the fact the government and UGC should think about (Azim, 2009). The second complaint against the private universities is about the outer campuses. In this regard, Quase (2007) thinks that, private universities should not restrict their operation to Dhaka city only. Rather they should extend their campuses all over the country. Other countries are operating distance campuses for a long time ago. Our country should also patronize this activity of private universities (Azim, 2009). Azim (2009) also recommended that, outer campuses should be established by following all the rules and regulations of UGC (Quase, 2007). In 2005, after an enquiry by the UGC the operation of five universities was suspended (Haque, 2009). Mannan (2009) claims that the reason behind this fact is that some universities are run by people who lacks the qualification to run a primary

school. He suggests that only coordination between UGC and Ministry of Education can solve the problem. Haque (2009) claims that too much intervention from the UGC can hamper the expansion of university education in the private sector. Miyan (2009) tells that higher education in the private sector has created in Bangladesh a new paradigm of quality and life related education. The private universities are filling the gap and they will fill the demand but for this they need constant support from the Government and UGC (Mannan, 2009).

2.3 Features of English Foundation Courses Offered at Private Universities of Bangladesh:

The English foundation courses offered at most Bangladeshi private universities have certain characteristics in common. All these are in-sessional courses spanning from one to four semesters and offered upon completion of a general English course. These courses are taught by English language teachers with no involvement of the core subject teachers and thus they have no subject-specific work throughout the course. The course contents usually include language practice activities on the four skills of English. However, there is much influence of grammar based teaching English in these courses.

The English foundation courses at different private universities are offered in the first two semesters of the undergraduate programs. The courses have two main parts delivered in two semesters. In both the semesters the courses offer lessons on grammatical items such as tenses, sentence types, number, adjectives, pronouns, suffixes, prefixes, transformation of sentences and so on. The composition part includes a variety of composition types - descriptive, narrative, argumentative etc. However, in the second semester, more genres of writing compositions are covered as students are required to write reports, letters, memorandum, definitions and describe charts. The courses also have some units on reading comprehension. There is another course that aims to develop speaking skills and the oral presentations.

2.4 Review of Related Research:

A variety of studies have been conducted in diverse contexts which have explored the needs, expectations and perceptions of students in relation to courses that support EAP skills.

Among the recent ones Singh (2014) has explored 130 undergraduate students' perception of the English language proficiency course at Malayan University. And it has been found through students' feedback that overall the students have a positive attitude towards the English language course. However, it is important for the authority to identify the language weaknesses of the students and implement sustainable measures to improve their level of English proficiency.

The study by De Silva & Devendra (2014) used 100 essays written by 100 students registered for the English for General Academic Purposes, explores the students' needs and expectations through a piece of writing (a timed essay) written by the students on a given topic prior to the beginning of their English course. The results indicate that students have a wide range of needs, which includes academic, occupational and social needs, which they hope to fulfil by following the EGAP course. This diversity of needs has implications for the future development and delivery of the EGAP course.

Rahman's (2012) study explored needs for reading skills among undergraduate students in the field of computer science at Putra University, Malaysia. It also explored the difficulties encountered by the students in reading texts for the computer science program. The study revealed the reading skills needed by the undergraduates of computer science for academic purposes. The study also revealed that a majority of the students of this specialized discipline faced difficulties and problems in reading in English for academic purposes. It is suggested that the findings of the study may be utilized for designing an English language course, namely "English for Computer Science" that suits the target needs of undergraduate students to develop their reading skills in English language for this specialized discipline at the university.

Another study (Perera, 2006) which used first year undergraduates in a Sri Lankan national university found that students have an overwhelming desire to learn English brought about by their perception of English as the direct link to future employment and success. Perera found that fulfilling this need through a single level course was not feasible and describes an attempt to introduce a lower-level course to support the needs of low-proficiency students.

Akin and Guceri (2001) carried out a materials evaluation at Turkey's Bilkent University. New course outlines and materials for EAP/EOP task-based syllabus had been designed and produced on the basis of a NA. Feedback on the effectiveness of the new materials found that the materials were unsatisfactory; lecture-based and theoretical and not task-based; and text selection was random. Based on this evaluation improvement plans for producing more effective materials were adopted.

Canagarajah (2001) in his ethnographic study which investigated student motivation, attitudes and their subjectivities to learn English using lived experiences of Tamil EAP students in northern Sri Lanka, found that the students expected the course to be grammar-oriented and they disliked skills or activity based teaching of English in the EAP classroom. Canagarajah noted a drastic fall in student attendance which he attributes to the irrelevance of material used for teaching.

2.5 Relevant Research in Bangladesh:

Khan (2000) in her evaluation of the English Foundation Course which was being taught to students of thirteen departments at the Arts Faculty at Dhaka University found that: students realized that English has the status of an international language and believed that there was no alternative to English and that is why the demand for English is increasing all over the world. They were also aware of the importance of English for the future and admitted that a) English is a pre-requisite for getting good jobs b) for being successful in competitive examinations (e.g.

BCS (Bangladesh Civil Service Exams)) and c) for career development d) for accessing higher education books e) and, in general, indispensable for communicating with the outer world. English is essential to give access to academic texts and for communication (Khan, 2000).

Her findings on students' views on the course were that: 'the majority of the students think that the course was useful only to a certain extent because all their expectations were not fulfilled. Students expressed their disappointment that hardly any work on 'listening' and 'speaking' was done in class and as a result their 'speaking skills' have not improved – a few students stated their grammatical abilities had improved – they were not fully satisfied with their textbook – they want the duration of the course to be extended – they pointed out the need for more classes on 'speaking' and 'writing.' They also suggested smaller classes, individual attention, and separate course for 'speaking' in second year and different textbooks for different departments' (Khan, 2000). The implications and suggestions for curriculum development made on the basis of her study were: 'the syllabus needs to be revised and developed—the content of the syllabus needs to be outlined clearly –appropriate methodology should also be specified. The current syllabus does not specify course objectives or methodology. The contents of the syllabus need to be rewritten keeping in mind the needs and demands of the students --- the emphasis on grammar in the current course may be reduced – the course needs to focus on the importance of the four skills –an integrated approach could be adopted – curriculum designers should understand discuss and outline the content of the syllabus --- "before revising the syllabus a needs analysis could also be carried out to determine student needs." (Khan, 2000)

Chowdhury (2009) carried out a needs analysis with 60 second year students and 30 teachers from Humanities department at Dhaka University. In this study the needs of the students and problems faced by the teachers as well as students and what has happened during the foundation course are illustrated.

Another needs analysis survey conducted by Chowdhury and Haider (2012) in Bangladesh using 40 undergraduates and four EAP teachers found that the existing EAP courses have major drawbacks in meeting learners' expectations in using acquired skills for both academic and professional purposes. These students felt reading, writing and speaking skills are more important to them than listening. However, the teachers were of the view that the students are unable to see the relevance of the English course in their main course of study and they consider it as an obstacle which has to be removed. The researchers recommend improvement in current EAP material through incorporation of materials relevant to core subjects and by giving more emphasis to productive skills i.e. writing and speaking.

<center>**CHAPTER-III**</center>

<center>**Research Methodology**</center>

3.0 Introduction:

This chapter provides the methodology of the study and discusses issues of the research design, theoretical framework, sampling, setting, instrumentation and materials, data collection and data analysis procedures and obstacles encountered.

3.1 Research Design:

In order to examine how the Foundation courses at tertiary level are meeting the needs of students, this survey was conducted through questionnaires with 150 randomly selected students of three private universities of Bangladesh situated in Dhaka city. A semi-structured questionnaire was developed for generating responses from the participants. The questionnaire included a total of 18 with 3 open ended questions regarding the English Foundation courses. A total of 150 first year students of the private universities were requested to complete the questionnaire. All these students had to take this compulsory English course in their very first semester. The survey was conducted with a view to generating both qualitative and quantitative data. The study used semi structured questionnaire. The questionnaire includes both open and close ended questions. The data collected from the respondent was compiled manually and responses are shown in percentage. A mix methods combining with both qualitative and quantitative methodologies have been used to analyze the research data. To design the quantitative data, Likert scale was used to collect and analyze the numeric data. However, the items in Likert scale ranges were 'Very Important', 'Important', 'Of some important', 'Not important'. Also to measure the participants' personal opinion about the overall foundation course, Likert Scale's used 'Preference of Teaching Styles' which ranges from 'Very helpful', 'Helpful', 'Somehow Helpful', and 'Not at all Helpful'. The study also generated views

through interviews of the 6 faculties who teach the foundation courses at the universities. Each of them was interviewed separately for about 10 minutes. The teachers were asked to share their preferences of teaching styles and give their views on pedagogic as well as other organizational aspects of the foundation course.

3.2 Theoretical Framework:

The main methodology used in the study was a survey questionnaire for students and personal interview with teachers. The questionnaire and interview questions were prepared based on literature review in the field. Khan's (2000) and Singh's (2014) instruments were used for finding out the students' opinion regarding their expectation and the usefulness of the English foundation course. Some parts of the survey questionnaire were inspired by Chowdhury & Haider (2011) which seemed relevant for the present study. In the present study Chowdhury's (2009) data collection tools were used to find out the preferred teaching styles of the teachers and students of the private universities of Dhaka city. Another research article by De Silva & Devendra (2014) have significantly influenced the study that aims to explore the nature of the present English foundation course at private universities, what students expect from these courses, and to what extent it's meeting the students' needs and expectations.

3.3 Sampling:

This research provides data of first year (first semester) undergraduate students of three different private universities. In this survey, convenience sampling technique has been followed to get response from 150 first semester students from different universities. The research also includes interview of 6 teachers teaching foundation course in the chosen three universities.

Table 1: Disciplines of the Respondents

Department	No of Respondents
BBA	65
CSE	23
Economics	7
EEE	41
Law	14
Total	150

3.4 Setting:

The data of this study have been collected in formal settings. In the classroom, questionnaires were provided among the students and asked to fill up. Most of the time the students' questionnaire survey was done after the class. Teacher's interviews were taken in their office room in their convenient time. Therefore, in both cases the settings were formal.

3.5 Instrumentation:

The survey has been conducted through questionnaire (for the students) and interview (of teachers). Questionnaires were distributed among the students in order to know the expectations of the students regarding the foundation course and to what extent the foundation course is helping them to meet those expectations.

3.5.1 Questionnaire:

The researcher prepared the questionnaire with the help of her supervisor and based on the theoretical framework. The format of the questionnaire is shown in Appendix-A. The questionnaire is mixed with both open-ended and close-ended questions. The questionnaire can be divided into four parts for better description. In the first part, there are four close-ended

questions and two open-ended questions. In the first three questions the researcher wanted to know the background of the participants. The next three questions have attempted to find out the students' opinion regarding the number of English foundation courses offered in their university and for how long they have to study at home for the FC course per day. In the second part of the questionnaire there are five questions, the researcher has given four options (very important/important/of some important/not important) for close-ended answers. The first question has aimed to find out how much attendance is important for the FC course. The second question has aimed to find out the students' priority as reasons for learning English, the following two questions are prepared to find out the importance of the students' success at their language abilities in terms of their current course and future profession, and the fifth question has aimed to find out the usefulness of the FC course. In the third part there are three close-ended questions that have four options (very often/often/somehow often/very rarely) and the first question has aimed to find out how often the students are given homework or assignment for FC course. The second and third questions are prepared to investigate how often Bangla is used inside the classroom and to what extent they think Bangla should be used in FC classroom. Lastly the fourth part of the questionnaire, the one open-ended question attempts to find out what the students are expecting to learn from the foundation course. And for the other three questions, the researcher has given four options (very helpful/helpful/of some helpful/not helpful) for close-ended answers. In the blank spaces under the first question students had the scope to mention what they want to learn from the FC course. And in the second question the students are asked to report to what extent the FC course is actually helping them to fulfil their expectations. The third question has aimed to find out to what extent the FC course helps them understand better the other course lectures. And in the last question the researcher has aimed to find out the students' preference of the teaching styles.

3.5.2 Interviews:

The interview questions for the teachers are shown in Appendix-B. Nine open-ended questions and one close-ended question were asked to interview the teachers. The first two questions were asked to find out the overall students' attendance and duration of the foundation course. Third and fourth questions were asked to find out the objectives of the course and the usefulness of the syllabus to achieve the objectives. Fifth question was asked to find out the appropriateness of the method and materials that are implemented while designing the course. The sixth question was asked to find out the frequency of homework and assignment. The seventh question was asked to find out to what extent the teachers give equal importance to the four skills. The eighth question addressed the teachers' perception regarding the role of Bangla in FC classroom. And the ninth question was asked to find out how the students are assessed for the course. At the end the teachers were asked to share their teaching preferences by marking the utility of nine different teaching techniques according to them (See Appendix-B).

3.6 Data Collection Procedure:

The data were collected through questionnaire and interview. The first step of data collection procedure was to take permission from institutional authority to survey student's questionnaire and interview teachers. Then it required talking with the course instructor in order to know the convenient date and time to survey questionnaire and take interview. The researcher had to settle down date and time before she went for data collection. In all the selected universities, undergraduate classes were held in the morning before the lunch break. For students survey photocopies of the questionnaire were distributed among them inside the classroom (before or after the class) and asked to return within 15 minutes. The researcher had to explain the questions in order to get the appropriate answers from the students, in some cases she had to use Bangla language to make them understand. Students filled up the questionnaire according

to their ideas and opinions regarding the English foundation course. After the students survey, teachers' interview were taken in office room. The questions were asked verbally and the answers were recorded in a mobile phone and then presented in writing (see the question list in Appendix- B). Teachers' experience, teaching strategies, and problems regarding teaching foundation course, all these factors were very important for this research. It took almost fifteen to twenty minutes to interview one single teacher.

3.7 Data Analysis Procedure:

At first, students' questionnaire have been checked (close-ended part) by counting their opinions and tables are used to show the percentage of responses in findings part. Then the total findings of the student's questionnaire (of both open-ended and close-ended questions) are discussed and analyzed in descriptive manner one after another. This part is quantitative and qualitative in nature. Then the findings of teachers' interviews (nine questions) are explained and analyzed one by one in descriptive manner. The whole data analysis procedure is based on the theoretical framework part to find out the answers of the central research questions.

3.8 Obstacles Encountered:

The researcher had to face a number of difficulties to get permission for collecting data. This study has covered a number of private universities and it was not easy to contact all the universities for getting permission to survey students' questionnaire and interview teachers. In most of the cases the researcher had to talk with the concerned authority of the university (head of the English department/ dean/ admin officer/ office executive) and showed the permission letter written by the supervisor of this study. Some cases, the teacher stayed in the classroom, which affects the students' answers in the questionnaire. Some of the teachers did not allow

enough time for students' survey before the class and in case of doing it after the class, some of the students did not want to stay in the classroom. It was difficult to handle both situations.

Results and Discussion

4.0 Introduction:

This chapter provides the summary of the findings of the research. The study attempts to find out the efficiency of Foundation English courses and students' expectations from the foundation courses. Concentrating on this matter the study sets out to find out answers to the following research questions:

a) What is the nature of the foundation English courses that are offered in Private Universities of Bangladesh?

b) What do students expect from these courses?

c) To what extent do the courses actually address the needs of the students?

The data of the research was collected from 150 students and 6 teachers of 3 private universities by means of questionnaire and interview.

4.1 Summary of Student Questionnaire Responses:

The findings of the student questionnaires indicate a wide range of views concerned with the foundation course. For example, the number of compulsory FC course, students preparation, students attendance, reasons for learning English, and use of L1/L2. In addition students' perception regarding the importance of language abilities for their academic success as well future profession and students' opinions regarding the usefulness of the course were elicited in general. The main findings are discussed below:

4.1.1 The number of English Foundation Course:

Responses to questionnaires revealed that students have to take more than 2 English foundation courses as compulsory throughout their undergraduate program. The students were asked

whether they want more number of foundation courses to be offered. The result is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Do you want your university to offer more number of English courses?
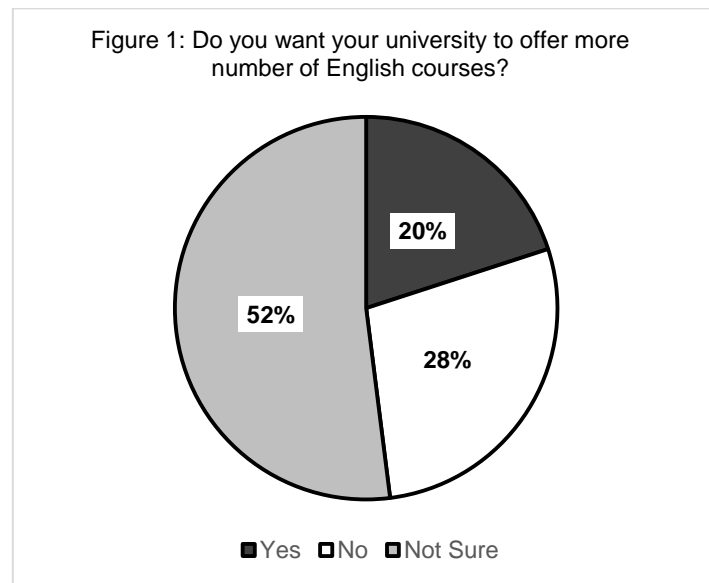
The above Figure 1 shows that 28% of the students do not want the university to offer any more number of English courses. Whereas 20% of the students have opined that they want more number of English courses. Overall 52% of the students expressed volatility that they are not sure about the ideal number of English courses and as the students are new for it is their very first semester, so it might be the reason behind their uncertainty. In the following question the students were asked how many courses they want the university to offer. Out of 20% students who said yes, 6 of them have stated maximum 4 more courses, 14 of them have stated 2 more courses, and lastly 10 of them have stated one more course should be offered.

4.1.2 Student Preparation during the English Foundation Course:

Most of the students perceive that they do not need to spend more than one hour a day to study for the foundation course. The result is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: How Many Hours Do You Need To Study At Home For This English Foundation Course?
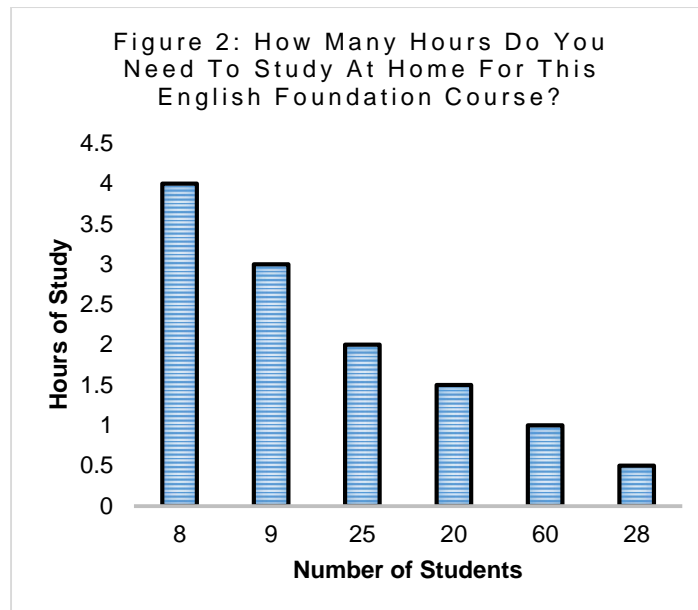
Figure 2 shows the maximum number of hours the students study at home for their English foundation course. 17 students have stated that they need to study at home 3 hours or more for the course probably because they take little more time to practice. Other 25 students have stated that they need maximum 2 hours to study at home a day for the English FC course. About 20 students have expressed that they need 1 and half hours to study at home. As the majority of the students (60 out of 150) have stated that they do not spend more than 1 hour, one possible interpretation of this statement could be the fact that they are not given plenty of assignments that require them to practice more at home. About 28 students have stated they need less than 1 hour and the reason behind it might be, the students usually work on the assignments during the class time so they do not need to study at home.

4.1.3 Student Attendance on the Foundation Course:

Responses to questionnaire revealed that student attendance in the course is good. The students consider it very important to attend the class regularly. The result is shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3: How important is the attendance of the class?

3

36

111

■Very Important ☐Important ■Somewhat Important
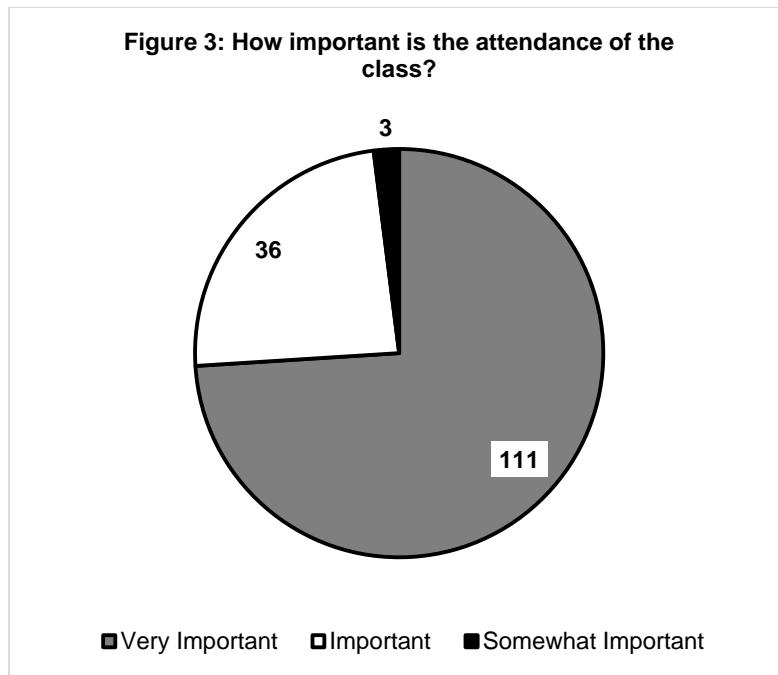
While the majority of the students (111 out of 150) consider the attendance of the course is very important, 36 students felt the attendance is important and only 3 students considered the attendance is somewhat important. One possible interpretation of this result could be the fact that the students are very much interested as they are just admitted to the universities so they are taking this course seriously and their enthusiasm also plays an important role for their class attendance.

4.1.4 Students' Reasons for Learning English:

The urge to learn English does not need any explanation nowadays. The students were asked to share their own reasons for learning English. Responses to questionnaire are illustrated below in Table 2.

Table 2: Students' Reasons for Learning English

Reasons	Very Important	Important	Of Some Important	Not Important
Because it enables me to carry my tasks more efficiently.	*68%*	22%	10%	0%
Because it will enable me to get a job easily.	46%	*48%*	4%	0%
Because I hope to further my education.	*56%*	34%	10%	0%
Because it is a university requirement	26%	*46%*	26%	0%
For a personal development	*64%*	24%	12%	0%
Because it will enhance my status among my friends	22%	24%	*35%*	0%
To integrate with the western culture	32%	*36%*	18%	0%

The above responses indicate that the students have various reasons for learning English. 68% of the students have agreed that they want to learn English because it enables them to carry their tasks more efficiently. Meanwhile 48% of the students have said that learning English is very important because it will enable them to get a job. About 56% students have expressed that they are hoping to go for higher education. On the other hand 46% of students have stated that they are learning English as a university requirement. 64% of the students have expressed that their reason for learning English for a personal development. Comparatively fewer students have expressed that they are learning English to enhance their status among friends, 35% of

the students have felt it somewhat important for a reason to learn English. Integrating with the western culture is another reason, 36% of the students have considered it to be an important reason learning English, whereas 32% students have mentioned it to be a very important reason. One thing in the responses might be found very positive that none of the students have said that these reasons are not important.

4.1.5 Importance of English Language Abilities for Students' Academic Success:

The students' opinion regarding whether English was a deciding factor for the students' academic success is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Importance of English Language Abilities for students' Academic Success

	Very Important	**Important**	**Of some important**	**Not important**
Listening to English	*68%*	30%	2%	0%
Speaking English	*88%*	10%	2%	0%
Writing English	*88%*	10%	2%	0%
Reading English	*56%*	42%	2%	0%

The above table shows the ratio of the students' opinion regarding the importance of English language abilities for their academic success. A majority of 88% students have mentioned that the ability of writing English as a very highly important skill. Responses revealed that the English speaking skill is considered very important by 88% of students for carrying out their study successfully. The listening of English is considered very important by 68% of the students. 56% of the students have stated that reading English is very important and 42% of the students have agreed that it is an important skill.

4.1.6 Importance of English Language Abilities for Future Profession:

The students' perception regarding the importance of English language abilities for the success in their future profession is presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Importance of English Language Abilities for Future Profession

	Very Important	**Important**	**Of Some Important**	**Not Important**
Listening to English	*70%*	24%	6%	0%
Speaking English	*84%*	14%	2%	0%
Writing English	*66%*	22%	12%	0%
Reading English	*46%*	40%	14%	0%

While commenting on the importance of English language abilities for successful future profession, a majority of 84% students have considered English speaking as the most important ability to be successful in their future profession. Among other abilities, 70% and 66% students respectively have mentioned that English listening and English writing is very important for a successful career in future. On the other hand reading English is not considered as highly important as the other 3 skills as only 46% students have mentioned it to be very important skill. There is one common feature between the responses in Table 2 & 3 that none of the students have considered any abilities as not important, it actually shows the students' prudence and understanding of the importance of all four skills of language.

4.1.7 Usefulness of the Foundation Course:

Most students have considered the foundation course to be useful and their responses (shown in Table 5) indicate interesting awareness of the role of English in education and in the Bangladeshi society.

Table 5: The Usefulness of the Foundation Course According to Their Importance

Usefulness of FC	Very Important	Important	Of some important	Not at all important
Improving Skills in general	*68%*	28%	4%	0%
Giving a chance to practice English	*52%*	42%	6%	0%
Preparation for the BCS Examination	*34%*	30%	28%	8%
Career Development	*68%*	24%	8%	0%
Accessing higher education books	*64%*	28%	6%	2%
Activities in the FC classroom increases the proficiency level	36%	*44%*	18%	2%

The above-mentioned responses indicate that the foundation course is to some extent useful in fulfilling the students' expectations. 68% and 28% students respectively have considered the foundation course to be very important and important for improving their skills in general. Career development is considered as very important and important usefulness of FC by respectively 68% and 24% students. Many students have addressed the fact as very important (64%) and important (28%) that the course helps them accessing higher education books

however 2% students have felt that the course is not at all important for the mentioned purpose. The students have also felt that the FC classroom gives them chance to practice English as 52% and 42% students respectively have mentioned it is very important and important usefulness of the course. 44% students have felt that the activities in the FC classroom increase their proficiency level as a very important utility of the course, whereas, 36% students have mentioned it to be important and 18% students have given it of some importance. Preparation for the Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) Examination is another option where 34% and 30% students respectively have mentioned that the course is very important and important for the purpose. However, 8% of the students have disagreed as they think the course is not at all helpful for the preparation of the BCS exam.

4.1.8 Homework and Assignment:

Responses to questionnaire revealed that the students are given homework and assignment frequently. The results are shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Homework and Assignment

How often you are given Homework and Assignment?				
Very Often	**Often**	**Somehow Often**	**Very Rarely**	**Total Number of Students**
30%	48%	14%	8%	**150**

The above statistics shows the ratio of how often the students are given homework and assignment. 48% students have stated that they are given homework and assignment often. 30% students have mentioned that they are given very often homework and assignment. 14% and 8% students respectively have said that they are given homework and assignment somehow often and very rarely.

4.1.9 Use of L1 (Bangla) in Foundation Course:

Students' responses regarding the use of L1 (Bangla) in the FC classroom are presented in Table 7 and through Figure 4.

Table 7: Use of L1/L2 on the Course

To what extent Bangla **is used** in the classroom?				
Very Often	**Often**	**Somehow Often**	**Very Rarely**	**Total Number of Students**
6	15	36	*93*	**150**
To what extent Bangla **should be used** in the classroom?				
3	33	*60*	*54*	**150**

The above table shows us the ratio of how much Bangla is used in the FC classroom and how much Bangla should be used in the FC classroom according the students. The majority of the students (93 out of 150) have stated that L1 (Bangla) is very rarely used in the FC classroom. 36 students have mentioned that L1 is used somehow often. One possible interpretation for the current responses could be the fact that the private universities are very particular about their course objectives, as the course is expected to enhance students' English skills, so there is an influence of that on the medium of instruction of the FC course. In the opinion of the respondents of the current research, 60 students have stated that L1 should be used somehow often in comparison to 54 students have mentioned L1 should be used very rarely. The responses show that the students are quite aware of how much L1 (Bangla) should be used. However, among all the respondents 33 students were of the opinion that it would help if L1 is used often.

Figure 4: Use Of L1/L2 On The Course
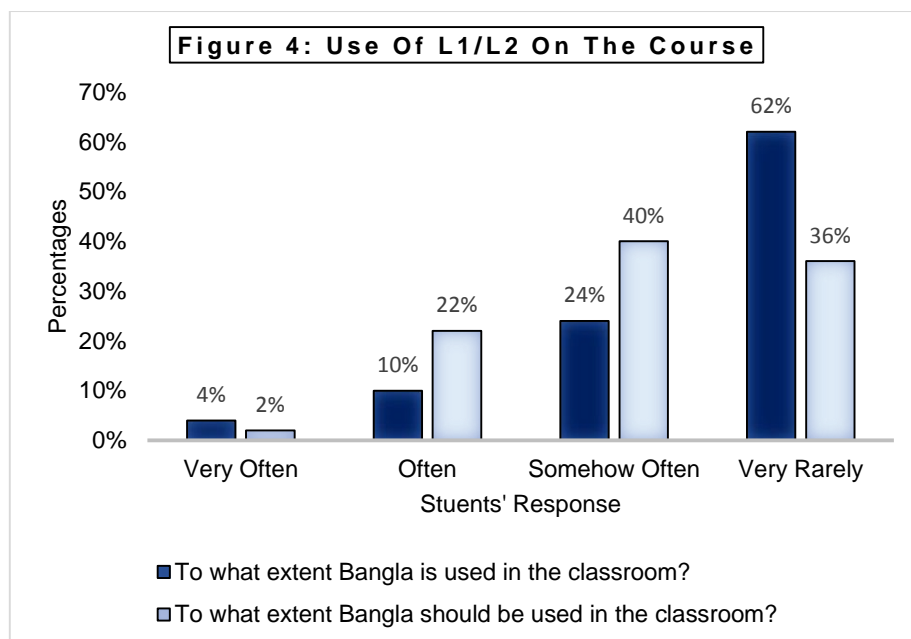
The responses (shown in Figure 4) indicate that 62% of the students have felt that Bangla is used very rarely whereas 36% students have suggested that it should be used very rarely. 24% students have said that Bangla is used somehow often in the FC classroom, on the other hand 40% students have felt that Bangla should be used somehow often to facilitate comprehension. Responses revealed 22% students were in the opinion that Bangla should be used often in the English FC classroom. It is important to notice that the students have just passed their higher secondary education and admitted to the universities and their request for more use of Bangla is understandable as ''The English proficiency of students in class 9 was two years and in class 12 four years behind the level assumed in their textbooks'' (Rahman, 1999). So it is very important for the teachers to balance the use of Bangla in the classroom according to the aim of the course which is improving English skills therefor the role of Bangla needs to be carefully and closely investigated.

4.1.10 Students Expectations from the English Foundation Course:

The students were asked to mention their thoughts regarding what they want to learn from the foundation course. The findings show some interesting responses as the students have showed

awareness in terms of what they want to achieve and they seemed very well-informed about their choices. Responses revealed in the open ended question that the students have a wide variety of needs and interests. Almost all the students perceive English as an essential skill in pursuing their higher studies. However, their expectations of the English course are not limited to academic purposes. In addition to the support for developing skills for academic success, they expect the English foundation course to provide them with general communication skills. The students were asked to share their opinion regarding the success of the foundation course in fulfilling their expectation. There is a uniformity of expectations among the majority of the students' responses. The findings are illustrated below in figure 5.

Figure 5: Students' Expectation & the course's success in meeting Students' Expectations
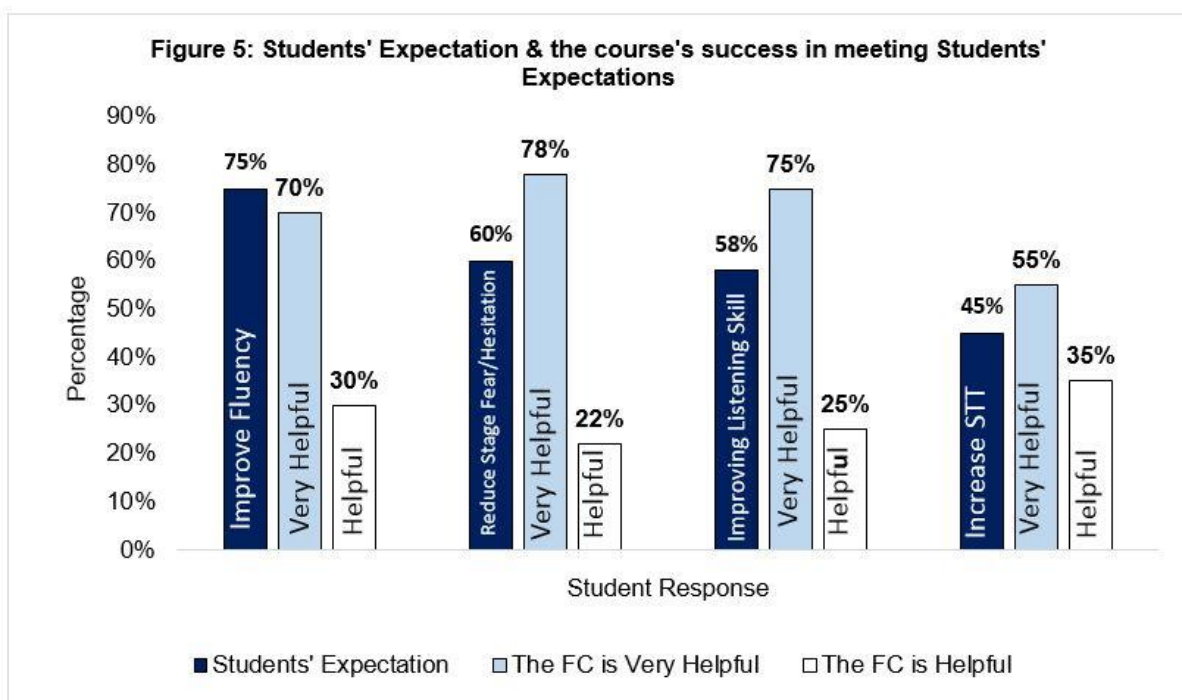
The above mentioned statistics indicates that there seem to be number of students who expect to improve their fluency through the English foundation course, as 75% students have mentioned that in their comment. At the same time 70% and 30% students respectively have felt that the foundation course is very helpful and helpful for improving their fluency. 60% students have suggested that they want to reduce their stage fright or hesitation and anxiety

through the foundation course. And 78% students have considered that the course is very helpful in reducing their stage fear. One of the interesting things to be noticed from the responses is the awareness of the students' regarding the importance of their listening skills is overwhelming. 58% students have listed that they want to improve their listening skill and 75% students have suggested that the course is helping them very much to enhance their listening skill. Among the students, 45% have expressed that they do want more time to speak and interact in the class which means increasing STT (student talking time). 55% and 35% students respectively have suggested that the course is very helpful and helpful for giving them more opportunity to speak and interact in the FC classroom. Based on the comments made by the students, it can be summarized that the students require more opportunity to converse in FC class. They want more public speaking, presentation activities which incorporate vocabulary, more number of interesting group work such as debate or practice pronunciation. Few students have commented that they want their exam structure to be modified following the norms of TOEFL or IELTS tests. All these remarks made by the students have showed the consciousness of the students regarding their education as well as their future profession.

4.1.11 Understanding Lectures of other Courses:

The students were asked to what extent the foundation course (FC) helping them to understand other course' lectures. The Answer is shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6: The Utility Of FC In Understanding Other Course' Lectures

2%
10%
36%
52%

◼ Very Helpful ◻ Helpful ◻ Somehow Helpful ◼ Not at all Helpful
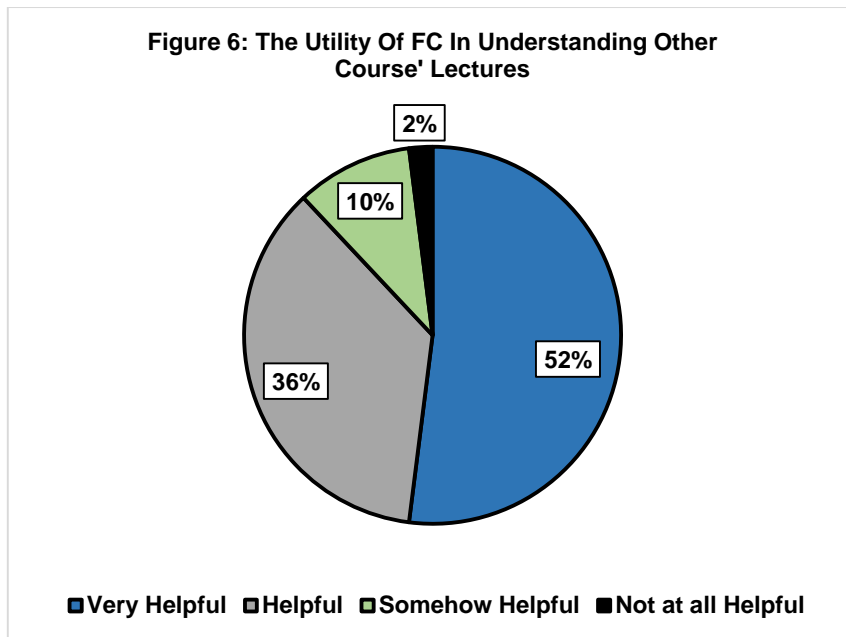
The above figure shows that 52% students have shared that the foundation course is very helpful for them to understand better in other course' lectures. On the other hand, 36% students have mentioned that the course is helpful as it enhances their English skills. However, 10% students have felt that the course is somehow helpful and 2% students have felt that this course is not at all helpful for better understanding other course' lectures. One possible interpretation of these responses could be the fact that the students who are benefiting from the foundation course are taking this course positively and others who are saying it (FC) is not at all helpful, probably because their expectations are much higher than others.

4.1.12 Students Preferences of Teaching Styles:

Responses to questionnaire revealed the preferred teaching styles of students. The findings are illustrated below in Table 8:

Table 8: Students' Preferences of Teaching Styles

Please share you preferences of teaching styles	**Very Helpful**	**Helpful**	**Somehow Helpful**	**Not At All Helpful**	**Total Number of Students**
Lecturing	*58%*	38%	0%	4%	**150**
Teacher asking questions & students answering	*48%*	48%	4%	0%	**150**
Teacher's feedback during group discussions	*58%*	34%	8%	0%	**150**
Students given work & working independently out of class	*42%*	42%	16%	0%	**150**
Student presentations	*60%*	32%	8%	0%	**150**
Students silently doing written work in class	26%	28%	*30%*	*16%*	**150**
Using drama music role plays games	34%	*36%*	28%	2%	**150**
Group or pair work	*58%*	32%	8%	2%	**150**
Students doing practical fieldwork	*46%*	34%	20%	0%	**150**

In the students' perception the most helpful teaching styles are, students' presentations (60%); lecturing (58%); Teacher's feedback during group discussions (58%); and group or pair work (58%); followed by, Teacher asking questions & students answering (48%); students doing practical work (46%); students given work and working independently out of class (42%);

using drama, music, role plays, games (34%) and students silently doing written work in class (26%). As 16% students have mentioned that they do not like to do written work silently in class, shows that the students are highly interested in interactive and communicative classroom.

4.2 Summary of Teachers' Responses:

The interview of teachers covered similar issues covered in the student questionnaire. Some additional issues such as, the appropriateness of the duration of FC, course syllabus and materials, were also covered. The main findings are described below:

4.2.1 Student Attendance:

The majority (5 out 6) of the teachers have commented that the attendance on the FC classroom is more than satisfactory. The teachers have expressed that the students are really enthusiastic as they are just started coming to the university so they are serious as well as curious about attending classes and their energy level is really high. Overall the regular attendance of the students can be a positive feature of the FC class.

4.2.2 Duration of the Foundation Course (FC):

The majority (5 out of 6) of the teachers seem to be happy about the length of the course and the number of sessions per semester. The usual FC class duration is 90 minutes long and 2 sessions per week. One of the teachers has commented that almost 4 sessions are covered by the final exam, midterm and quiz/presentation, therefore it could be helpful if 3 more sessions could be provided. Overall the duration of the English foundation course is fairly satisfactory.

4.2.3 English Foundation Course' Objectives:

According to the teachers, the foundation course is designed to improve students' academic English skills integrating reading, listening, writing and public speaking skills to prepare the

students entering the universities for studying through the medium of English. The course also reduces learners' overall hesitation, nervousness and inhibition in speaking. By the end of the course the students are expected to learn a wide variety of techniques to support the enhancement of their reading, speaking and presentation skills for all sorts of academic and practical purposes. So all the teachers have stated that the goal of the English FC is to enhance communication skills by removing stage fright and gradually developing the students for autonomous learning. To what extent the English foundation course is helping the students to achieve the goals, is found in the following question.

4.2.4 Usefulness of the FC:

Majority of the teachers expressed the view that the course is useful for students because the students are really interested in the classroom. And the activities of the class enhance the students' development to reach the expected level. The purpose of the English foundation course (FC) is to make the students interactive and make them use English for communication. The course content is designed in such way that it helps to serve the purpose. One of the teachers have commented that initially the students who are hesitant kept quite in the class, eventually and gradually those students start to participate in the class and speak and give presentations which is a remarkable utility of the foundation course.

4.2.5 Syllabus, Text and Materials of FC:

Most of the teachers have mentioned that the universities usually provide them a course syllabus followed by course objectives and referencing texts, and the teachers are capable of incorporating those things with their own teaching style. Hornby's *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English,* Lucas' *The Art of Public Speaking*, Benz and Dworak's *Tapestry: Listening & Speaking 1*, and Chamot, Diaz and Baker-Gonzalez's *Up Close 1: English for Global Communication* are some of the texts that were mentioned by the teachers.

All the teachers have commented that they provide necessary handouts and supplementary materials on their own as suitable for the target students. The teachers also provide online materials if it seems appropriate. One thing should be noted that all of the texts or materials mentioned by the teachers were from western source, and the reason behind it, they think there are lack of local resources in terms of material and texts.

4.2.6 Assignment:

Majority (5 out of 6) of the teachers have commented that they usually give homework and assignments at the end of the class and receive them in following class. One of the teachers have expressed that the students are little reluctant to work at home so the students usually finish the work during class time but they are given assignments which they have to turn up. Overall it can be said that the students are given assignments often and according to the teachers, the students are not overwhelmed.

4.2.7 Integrated Classroom:

Responses from the teachers indicate that they perceived their FC classroom gives importance to the four skills of English language. Most of the teachers have felt that it is not possible to ignore any of the skills (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) in a language class where communication skills are being practiced. Although few of the teachers have commented that due to lack of technical facility and multimedia resources, it becomes difficult for them to teach English listening skills and due to the number of students, it is not possible for the teacher to give equal importance to all the four skills.

4.2.8 Role of L1 (Bangla):

The majority of the teachers have stated that Bangla should be used very rarely inside the FC classroom. The teachers have shared the view that every opportunity should be taken to use the

target language in meaningful situations. The L1 should have minimum role in the classroom. However, in order to get the message through, sometimes L1 is needed. But most of the teachers have mentioned that they encourage the students to interact with teacher and with each other in English to develop their communication skills.

4.2.9 Assessment:

Teacher responses to the kinds of assessment done for the course show that the teachers give feedback to students on their progress. They usually give class tests, quick quizzes followed by a final exam and student presentation. One of the teachers have commented that it would be helpful if the tests are taken earlier in the middle of the semester otherwise the students are very much overwhelmed by the exam of all the other courses towards the end of the semester. During the entire course the teachers observe the students development and give feedback based on their performance.

4.2.10 Teachers' Preference of Teaching Styles:

Responses to questionnaire revealed the preferred teaching styles of teachers. The findings are illustrated below Table 9;

Table 9: Teachers' Preference of Teaching Styles

Please share you preferences of teaching styles	Very Helpful	Helpful	Somehow Helpful	Not At All Helpful	Total Number of Teacher
Lecturing	*50%*	*50%*	0%	0%	**6**
Teacher asking questions & students answering	*67%*	33%	0%	0%	**6**
Teacher's feedback during group discussions	*83%*	17%	0%	0%	**6**
Students given work & working independently out of class	17%	*50%*	33%	0%	**6**
Student presentations	*83%*	17%	0%	0%	**6**
Students silently doing written work in class	17%	17%	33%	*33%*	**6**
Using drama music role plays games	0%	*67%*	16%	17%	**6**
Group or pair work	*67%*	17%	16%	0%	**6**
Students doing practical fieldwork	33%	*50%*	17%	0%	**6**

In the teachers' view the most helpful teaching styles are, Teacher's feedback during group discussions (83%); students' presentations (83%); and group or pair work (67%) followed by Teacher asking questions & students answering (67%). Lecturing is also preferred by 50% teachers as a very helpful style of teaching. The other preferred teaching styles are considered

as helpful by the teachers are using drama, music, role plays, games (67%); students given work and working independently out of class (50%); and students doing practical work (50%). The least favorite teaching style is students silently doing written work is considered somehow helpful by 33% teachers and 33% teachers have felt that is not at all important.

4.3 Findings in terms of Comparison:

One of the main purposes of conducting this evaluation study was to explore the present condition of the English foundation course in private universities of Dhaka city. The present study deals with students' expectation and feedback and teachers' perception about the English foundation course. The study attempts to find out how much students from different disciplines are benefiting from their academic as well professional development. The findings of this study shows significant similarity between the expectations of the students and the pedagogy delivered by the teachers.

While commenting about the attendance, the students have stated the attendance of English FC classroom is very important and the teachers have also suggested that the regular attendance of English FC classroom is more than satisfactory.

One of the significant findings of this research is that the students' response on the importance of the four skills of English language is remarkable. The students are becoming more aware of the importance of the fours skills, reading, writing, listening and speaking. And they have showed positive attitude towards the impact of English foundation course in building their confidence on these four skills. At the same time the teacher responses have showed that they do give emphasis on writing and speaking more than other two skills reading and listening, however they have felt that the skills are interlinked between themselves and one sole skills cannot be taught or practiced without practicing the other three language skills. But due to lack of resources and time constraint, teachers sometimes have to negotiate with students' demand.

Overall it can be said that earlier studies have presented how listening and speaking skills are ignored in private universities but in the present study, responses revealed positive awareness among the students and the teachers as well.

Both the responses from the teachers and students have showed significant positivity regarding the utility of the English foundation course. All of them have acknowledged the positive impact of the English foundation course for students' better performances in communication. The course is worthy of appreciations as it helps the students improving their skills in general, the activities of FC classroom develops their English proficiency level, and the students have accepted the importance of the English foundation course over their career development. However students' expectation of getting more opportunity to speak is sometimes ignored by the teachers due to the large class size and time constraint. Usually the FC class size is 35-40 students that in the opinion of the teachers, is a large class size. The teachers have commented that if the class size is within 20-25, then it would be easier for them to address the individual students' needs. This class size issue should be handled carefully by the university authority.

Students' responses have revealed that they are given homework or assignment very often. The teachers have stated the same opinion regarding the frequency of homework or assignments. At the same time, the teachers have mentioned that the amount of homework or assignment given to the students are quite manageable for them.

The questionnaire tried to find out the students' opinion regarding the use of L1 in the English FC classroom. The majority of the students have supported that Bangla should be used rarely. The opinion of the students is accepted by their teachers as they think only Bangla is needed when any difficult vocabularies are concerned, otherwise every student must participate in the class activities and the medium should be only English. The understanding between the teacher and the students plays an important role here for balancing the harmony of the class conversation. It depends on the teacher how he/she handles the use of L1 in the English

foundation classroom. As Alexander, Argent and Spencer (2008) have said that a teacher have a crucial role to play in 'relating to academic communities as language experts' which may benefit the students.

The findings revealed the preferred teaching styles of both teacher and student. While the teachers have favored the teacher's feedback during group discussions as very helpful teaching styles, the students have preferred students' presentations. Both the responses from the teachers and students have similarity as most of them have preferred students' presentations; and group or pair work styles; lecturing; and group or pair work as very helpful techniques. Similarly majority of both teachers and students have felt that students silently doing written work is not that helpful teaching style as the goal of this course is to develop communicative competence. When teaching style is concerned, teachers usually take students' choice into account as the progress of the students is the main objective of the teachers.

4.4 Discussion in terms of central research Questions:

The research questions of the present study are—

a) What is the nature of the foundation English courses that are offered in Private Universities of Bangladesh?

b) What do students expect from these courses?

c) To what extent do the courses actually address the needs of the students?

From the findings of both the students' questionnaire and teachers' interview, it can be said that the nature of English foundation course is functional English. The English foundation course attempts to cover the four skills of English language. The course is divided into two major wings: speaking and listening, and reading and writing. The preferred teaching methodology of the course is communicative and interactive. This approach is to ensure active student participation through group and pair work as well as independent presentations. The

course attempts to focus on developing fluency in listening, speaking, reading and writing both in and outside the classroom. Students are expected to improve oral communication skills for academic interactions through functional and situational language. Students are guided on how to become independent learners that helps them on learning their major subjects. The assessment of the students is based on the midterm result, assignments, individual presentation, and the student's class contribution. Therefore, the overall progress of the students is monitored by the teachers.

The responses revealed by the student questionnaire have pointed out the expectations of the students from the English foundation course. While commenting their expectations from the foundation course students have mentioned that they want to improve their fluency; reduce their stage fright or hesitation and anxiety enhance their listening skills. The students have also shared that they want more time to speak and interact in the class which means increasing STT (student talking time). The students are interested in more public speaking, presentation activities. Overall it can be said that the students expected the English foundation course to help them practice how to speak fluently, listen carefully, read without interruption and write accurately in English.

The responses received for the present study shows that the students have felt that the foundation course is quite helpful for improving their fluency and enhancing their listening skills. The student responses revealed that the foundation course is to some extent meeting the expectations of them. The success of the course lies in the fact that it makes the students interact with peers and teachers that results in developing their communication skills for academic life and as well their real life demand.

4.5 Discussion of the findings:

The overall findings indicates that the English foundation course is going under lot of modification to cope up with variety of needs and demand of the students, and the students are quite satisfied with the present condition of the EFC classroom activities. The Foundation course is offered to almost all students who need to enhance their core academic English language skills. The findings suggest that students have a wide range of needs, for example, academic, occupational and social needs, which they hope to fulfill by following the English foundation courses. This diversity of needs requires future development and delivery of the English foundation courses, taking into consideration the needs of students who are involved in learning a variety of disciplines. Thus, the academic staff in the Department of Language Studies should re-examine the resources and opportunities that are currently available at the private universities of Bangladesh. One major pragmatic challenge that has been noted in previous studies, which is pertinent to the present research as well, is that of responding to a range of needs given the limited contact hours allocated for English language teaching in the context of a large institution like the private universities. The findings of any evaluation have to be analyzed within the context from which they have been drawn. Although the previous researches have different issues attached with the foundation course and its' effect on the students' needs, however, the responses from the present study have showed that the English foundation course is helping the students to improve their self-confidence and communications skills and the teachers are quite happy with the performances of the students.

CHAPTER-V

Conclusion

5.0 Introduction

To be efficient in English language it is necessary to be proficient in listening, speaking, reading and writing skills (Abedin, Majlish and Akter, 2009). The private universities offer basic or fundamental courses of English language to enhance the language proficiency of students, but it is a matter of concern how the courses are fulfilling the needs of students. The present study aimed to focus on how much the courses are meeting the students' needs for language competency. The small scale research was conducted to explore the students' expectations from the English foundation courses and the usefulness of the foundation course which are offered by the private universities. To reach the goal the study collected data from 150 students and 6 teachers of 3 private universities.

5.1 Summary of the findings:

The main findings of the study presents a wide range of students needs from the English foundation course. The responses revealed that students have different requirements from the course both academic, personal and professional. The responses also suggest that the present course is fulfilling their expectations quite well but there is always room for improvement. Although the previous works of different researchers have found different issues concerning the needs of the students and the delivered output of the course. And the needs analysis really influenced the nature of the English foundation courses over the years in terms of the curricula and teaching techniques. However, in the present study the students seemed quite satisfied with their course' delivery. They showed positive attitude towards the course. The teachers' comments have mentioned the promising future of the foundation course and its impact upon the students. They have agreed that it is difficult for them to handle all the diverse requirements

of the students from different disciplines, but sure they manage by prioritizing the prime objectives of the course which is developing students' English language proficiency.

5.2 Recommendations:

Based on the findings it may be mentioned that the present state of English foundation course have been through so many modifications to reach where it is right now. One of the possible reasons behind it, is the changing demand of the students' academic needs and job market. And the advancement of the English foundation course is a continuous process. The process of advancement should be evaluated and examined from time to time to see the effectiveness of the course. Based on the responses from both the teachers and students, some recommendations are drawn below:

- The English FC classroom should be learner-centered.

- Classroom environment should be interactive, so the students do not hesitate to seek help from the teachers.

- As the class duration is limited with large class size, so one-to-one counseling should be practiced to meet students' requirements.

- The use of ICT, i.e. Google classroom, virtual online tools of communication, and other resources should be introduced and practiced.

- The classroom activities should focus more on developing students' vocabulary stock.

- The topics used for students' presentations should be connected not only with their course objectives but also to their disciplines. For example, a student from BBA dept. should be given the opportunity to work on topics that are suitable to his subject area.

- Students from different disciplines should be interested in sharing their own knowledge and communicating with each other.

- Teachers need to be trained to take the integrated language classes.

- Teachers need to be mentally prepared to teach the activities that focus speaking and listening skills with the existing constraints.

- Effective materials should be produced by the teachers to make the learning enjoyable and in this regard teachers need some expertise to prepare those.

- Materials should be used according to the learners' level and they should be given the scope to use their background knowledge to connect with the materials;

- Curiosity and interest should be aroused among the learners to involve them in the class activities for better classroom contribution.

5.3 Further studies:

The data for this study was collected only from three private universities of Dhaka city. Research can be done with large number of universities both in Dhaka and in the other districts of Bangladesh. Furthermore, comparative studies can be done by comparing public and private universities.

5.4 Conclusion:

As Khan (2000) has said that evaluation is an intrinsic part of teaching and learning. And her evaluation study is useful background for any future evaluations. Fundamental to the success of the English foundation course is the competencies of the coordinators and the teachers who are responsible for the content of the course and who delivers it. Thus the English language teacher would be primarily responsible for training students in adapting macro linguistic skills to their specific purposes.

One thing to be noted that the English FC outlines which aim to engage students in interactive activities and improve students' communicative competence cannot be applied fully because of large class and time constraint. This problem is further exacerbated by the fact that

undergraduate students who have competing demands on their time as they are balancing studies of different courses, are also not in a position to spend much time outside the classroom. Given the multiplicity of needs that are posited by students, and the limitations faced by students, it is essential that needs be prioritized in deciding which particular needs would be addressed by the proposed Basic English foundation course in the limited time span that is allocated. It is also important to revise materials further in a manner that fosters independent learning to a great extent. Based on the findings of this study from a small sample it may be generally concluded that the existing condition of English foundation courses in the private universities are regenerating to cope up with the students' needs for personal improvement, academic success and for job purposes. Coping with these requirements, it would require academic staff in English language teaching department to re-examine the resources and opportunities that are currently available.

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Appendix-A

Questionnaire for the Students

A)   What is your Age?

Less than 17	17-19	20-22	More than 22

B)   Educational Background- HSC/A Level

C)   Please mention which department you are from?

BBA	CSE	EEE	Economics	English	Law	Microbiology	Pharmacy	Others-

D)   Do you want your university to offer more number of English courses?
  Yes/No/Not Sure

E)   If yes, then how many courses should be offered? (Ignore this question, if your answer to question no D is No)

F)   How many hours do you need to study at home for this English Foundation course?

G)   How important is the attendance of the class?

Very Important	Important	Of some importance	Not important

H)   What are your reasons for learning English? Please rate the following reasons according to their importance.

Reasons for Learning English	Very Important	Important	Of some important	Not important
Because it enables me to carry my tasks more efficiently.				
Because it will enable me to get a job easily.				
Because I hope to further my education.				
Because it is a university requirement				
For a personal development				

Because it will enhance my status among my friends				
To integrate with the western culture				
Others (Please specify)				

I) How important are the following abilities for your academic success?

	Very Important	**Important**	**Of some important**	**Not important**
Listening to English				
Speaking English				
Writing English				
Reading English				

J) How important are the following abilities for your future profession after graduation?

	Very Important	**Important**	**Of some important**	**Not important**
Listening to English				
Speaking English				
Writing English				
Reading English				

K) Please rate the usefulness of the foundation course according to their importance.

Usefulness of FC	**Very Important**	**Important**	**Of some important**	**Not at all important**
Improving Skills in general				
Giving a chance to practice English				
Preparation for the BCS Examination				
Career Development				
Accessing higher education books				
Activities in the FC classroom increases the proficiency level				

L)   How often you are given Homework and Assignment?

Very Often	Often	Somehow Often	Very Rarely

M)   To what extent Bangla is used in the classroom?

Very Often	Often	Somehow Often	Very Rarely

N)   To what extent Bangla should be used in the classroom?

Very Often	Often	Somehow Often	Very Rarely

O)   What do you want to learn from this English compulsory course? Mention as many as you want.

P)   To what extent the course is helping you to learn the things you have mentioned?

Very helpful	Helpful	Somehow Helpful	Not at all Helpful

Q)   To what extent this English foundation course (FC) help you understand better the other course lectures?

Very helpful	Helpful	Somehow Helpful	Not at all Helpful

R)   Please share you preferences of teaching styles

	Very helpful	Helpful	Somehow Helpful	Not at all Helpful
Lecturing				
Teacher asking questions & students answering				
Teacher's feedback during group discussions				
Students given work & working independently out of class				
Student presentations				
Students silently doing written work in class				
Using drama music role plays games				
Group or pair work				
Students doing practical fieldwork				

Appendix-B

<u>**Interview Questions for the Teachers**</u>

A) How is the overall students' attendance of the English Foundation course?
B) Do you think the duration of the course is appropriate for every students?
C) What students are expected to achieve from these courses?
D) Do you think the syllabus is useful in terms of meeting those expectations?
E) Is there any fixed strategy in terms of textbooks and methodologies to be implemented in the classroom? If yes, then who designs it?
F) How often do you give students homework or assignments?
G) Do you give full importance to the four skills equally?
H) Comment on the role of L1/ Bangla in FC classroom?
I) How students are assessed in the English foundation course?
J) Please share you preferences of teaching styles:

	Very helpful	**Helpful**	**Somehow Helpful**	**Not at all Helpful**
Lecturing				
Teacher asking questions & students answering				
Teacher's feedback during group discussions				
Students given work & working independently out of class				
Student presentations				
Students silently doing written work in class				
Using drama music role plays games				
Group or pair work				
Students doing practical fieldwork				