

# Teaching English Pronunciation at the Tertiary Level in Bangladesh

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Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree  
of Master of Arts in English Language Teaching (ELT)

Department of English  
EAST WEST UNIVERSITY

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To  
My loving parents

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## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis 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 at other institutions.

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## ABSTRACT

Pronunciation no doubt is one of the most significant and inevitable parts of teaching English in particular and any other languages in general (Hayati, 2008). Notwithstanding, pronunciation hardly receives sufficient importance in teaching as well as learning English at any level in Bangladesh (Maniruzzaman, 2008). As a consequence, students get little opportunity to practise English pronunciation, and hence have problems with it. The purpose of this study was to take account of the extent to which English pronunciation is taught, and while teaching/learning pronunciation what types of problems teachers and learners face at the undergraduate level of English departments in private and public universities in Bangladesh.

The data was collected from 30 teachers and 160 students through interviews and questionnaire from two public and eight private universities. Dalton and Sheildhofer's (1994) Bottom-up and Top-down approaches were used to analyze the data. Findings suggest that there is no specific course on English pronunciation offered at the tertiary level in the English departments at the universities in Bangladesh. Based on the findings it seems that most of the English departments offer courses in 'English Phonetics & Phonology', which usually cover the theoretical aspects of pronunciation. As a result, students do not get sufficient opportunities to practise English pronunciation. Besides, the teachers suffer from lack of materials, courses and infrastructural facilities for teaching English pronunciation. Similarly, the students also suffer from the same problems to practise this skill.

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### **1.1 Introduction**

Learning a second/foreign language includes developing communicative competence in the basic skills- listening, speaking, reading, and writing of the language. Listening and speaking being dependent on each other are different from reading and writing since the former are used in face to face and direct communication, whereas the later are used in indirect communication. Hence, pronunciation appears to be unavoidable in case of listening and speaking as reception and production of information heavily depend on intelligible pronunciation (Maniruzzaman, 2002; 2006a). In this connection, Hancock (2003) maintains that pronunciation is inextricably tied with listening and speaking. Nonetheless, pronunciation hardly receives sufficient importance in teaching as well as learning English at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels in Bangladesh (Maniruzzaman, 2008).

At the tertiary level in both public and private universities in Bangladesh, the English departments offer courses in English language, ELT (English Language Teaching), English literature, discourse analysis, media studies, business English, and so on. Amongst the courses, a course in English Phonetics and Phonology including some theoretical aspects of segments and suprasegments is offered. Besides, one or two courses in English speaking and listening are taught. But English pronunciation practice appears to have inadequate attention in both teaching and learning (Maniruzzaman, 2008).

Therefore, a study is needed to determine the significance of teaching pronunciation in an EFL country like Bangladesh, especially at the tertiary level. Such a study would reveal problems associated with teaching and learning this skill and put forward constructive suggestions.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

At the different levels of education in Bangladesh, various measures have so far been taken to teach English, but the outcome appears to be disappointing. This is evident especially in case of a student's proficiency in listening and speaking skills at the tertiary level, where the student still learns the language although he/ she has already studied it for at least 12 years. This phenomenon may be attributed to the assumption that EFL listening and speaking including pronunciation do not receive proper and adequate importance in teaching at any level of education here (Maniruzzaman, 2008).

Generally, the English departments at private/public university offer courses in 'English Phonetics and Phonology' at the tertiary level. They teach the students theoretical part of those courses such as vowel phonemes, consonant phonemes, syllable, stress, intonation, transcription and so on but do not take any measure for oral practice (pronunciation). Alam (2006) claims that most of the teachers do not give any effective activities in the class for pronunciation practice. Only theoretical knowledge cannot make one's pronunciation, intonation and stress perfect and after a lot of practice one can achieve the desired standard (*ibid*). Maniruzzaman (2008)

argues that maximum EFL teachers do not have useful strategies or techniques for teaching pronunciation and as they do not know what strategies are appropriate when they meet a specific problem, they simply avoid pronunciation instruction in the classroom by employing shrewd tricks. Khan (2007) holds similar views of EFL teachers' limitations in teaching pronunciation.

As a result, students who complete their Bachelor of Art degree in English are found to have problems in English pronunciation. Because of this, in the job market their pronunciation often fails to impress the interview board. Moreover, they also face a lot of problems in communicating with others in their real life situations.

### **1.3 Purposes of the study**

The objective of this study is to emphasize teaching English pronunciation at the tertiary level especially in the department of English. It would take account of the extent to which pronunciation is taught and while teaching/learning pronunciation, what types of problem EFL teachers and learners face and how they can overcome those problems. Hence, it is expected that both the teachers, students and the research community would be benefited from the findings of this study.

### **1.4 Central Research Questions**

The study addresses the following research questions:

1. To what extent is English pronunciation taught at the undergraduate level of English departments at the private and public universities?

2. What problems do the teachers face in teaching English pronunciation at the tertiary level?
3. What problems do the students face in learning English pronunciation at the tertiary level?

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

To date, a huge number of studies have been conducted on varied aspects of ELT. In Bangladesh, some studies have also been carried out on this domain. Nowadays many EFL researchers as well as scholars are found to be interested in revealing the role and importance of ELT in our education planning and execution. They are doing research on the different aspects of ELT to improve the teaching of the four basic skills. But surprisingly, a very few researchers have shown interests in conducting studies on teaching English pronunciation at the tertiary level. In this respect the present study is significant.

Furthermore, the present study concentrates on the issues of English pronunciation teaching and learning problems at the tertiary level. It is expected that the present study would play a positive role in improving teaching and learning English pronunciation related to both listening and speaking by detecting problems and advocating possible solution.

## **1.6 Delimitation**

In this study, data was collected from the both public and private universities which have English departments and a particular program that is BA in English. To delimit this study the researcher conducted survey among two public and eight private universities in Dhaka division.

## **1.7 Limitation of the study**

English pronunciation related materials were not sufficient in the Bangladeshi context. This was why, the researcher had to use some secondary research (articles and books) by the authors from other countries for the literature review.

## **1.8 Operational Definitions**

There are several terms used in this study that need to be defined. The definitions are given below.

### **1.8.1 EFL**

It stands for English as a foreign language. A foreign language like English in Bangladesh is used in specific formal situations, not in day to day life communication (Maniruzzaman, 1998).



### **1.8.2 ELT**

It is the acronym of English Language Teaching. It covers syllabus/ curriculum design, materials development, testing system etc necessary for teaching English to the speakers of other languages (Shahidullah, 2002; Maniruzzaman, 1998).

### **1.8.3 CLT**

It is used for Communicative Language Teaching. It aims at developing communicative competence of the learner in the target language (Larsen-Freeman, 2000).

### **1.8.4 IPA**

IPA stands for International Phonetic Alphabet. A set of symbols and conventions adopted by the International Phonetic Association as a universal system for the transcription of speech sound (Roach, 2001).

### **1.8.5 Phonetics**

Phonetics is the production, transmission, reception and realization of the speech sounds (Trask, 1997; Roach, 2001).

### **1.8.6 Phonology**

Phonology studies and analyses how speech sounds are structured for producing meaning (Trask, 1997; Collins & Mess, 2003).

### **1.8.7 Phoneme**

A phoneme is a set of similar sounds showing meaning differences or differentiating between words (Yule, 1996).

### **1.8.8 Syllable**

A syllable stands for a unit of pronunciation typically larger than a single sound and smaller than a word (Maniruzzaman, 2006b). It consists of a vowel as a compulsory element and one or more consonants at the onset and/ or in the termination as optional elements, which is pronounced with a single contraction of the lungs (Roach, 2000; Gussman, 2002).

### **1.8.9 Stress**

Stress means prominence in pronunciation normally produced by four factors 'loudness' of voice, 'length' of syllables, 'pitch' related to frequency of vibration of the vocal folds as well as to low/high tone and 'quality' of vowels functioning individually or in combination (Roach, 2000; Maniruzzaman, 2004).

### **1.8.10 Intonation**

According to Wells (2006), intonation is the melody of speech. Maniruzzaman (2006b) states that intonation is a systematic and regular feature of speech. It possesses definite patterns that can be analyzed according to their structures and functions. This phenomenon is employed by the speaker to convey information over and above that which is expressed through the utterances or sentences (*ibid.*).

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### **2.1 English Pronunciation Teaching: A Brief History**

There have been many differences of opinion over the years about the role of pronunciation in language teaching and about how best to teach it (Hismanoglu, 2006). Florez (1998) notes that in the grammar- translation method of the past, pronunciation was almost irrelevant and therefore, seldom taught. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the direct method was introduced (Barman, Sultana & Basu, 2006). This method required native speakers or native speaker-like persons as teachers whose job was to develop natural proficiency of the target language in the learner (Hismanoglu, 2006). Therefore, pronunciation teaching received primary importance in this method (*ibid*).

Castillo (in Otlowski, 1998) points out that during the second world war, the audio lingual method being constituted of repeating, minimal pairs, drilling, imitation, short conversations used to put special emphasis on pronunciation of words and utterances of the second/ foreign language. Around the same time the situational approach in Britain would stress teaching pronunciation of the words and expression of the target language (Hismanoglu, 2006). Since late 1960, the communicative language approach has been seen to emphasize adequately teaching all the basic skills including intelligible pronunciation of the second/foreign language (Nadir, Krishnasamy & Mello, 2006).

Thus it appears that teaching pronunciation of the second/foreign language started with the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and still continues (Hismanoglu 2006).

## 2.2 Aspects of English Pronunciation

“The concept of pronunciation may be said to include the sounds of the language as well as stress, rhythm and intonation” (Ur, 1991: 47). Sounds of the language fall under segmental elements whereas stress, rhythm and intonation are suprasegmental features (Roach, 2001). (Maniruzzaman (2008) points out that English pronunciation teaching should cover the segmental and suprasegmentals as well as the training of the speech organs, such as lips, teeth, alveolar ridge, palate, tongue, vocal folds, ears and so on.

The segmentals encompass vowel and consonant sounds, preferably phonemes, as well as syllables (Roach, 2001). A phoneme is a set of similar sounds showing meaning differences or differentiating between words (Yule, 1996). A syllable consists of a vowel as a compulsory element and one or more consonants at the onset and in the termination as optional elements, which is pronounced with a single contraction of the lungs (Roach, 2000; Gussman, 2002). The English language has forty four phonemes among them twelve monophthongs / ɪ : æ e ɜ : ɪ i : ʊ : ʊ u : /, eight diphthongs / eɪ aɪ ɔɪ eɪ ɪə ʊə aʊ əʊ /, twenty four consonants / b d f g h j k l m n p r s t t ʃ v w z d / (Balasubramanian, 1981; Baker, 2006). While the vowels are articulated without any obstacle in the vocal track, the consonant are produced with some blockage of the air passage (Sethi & Dhamija, 1997). Maniruzzaman (2008) argues that the treatment of

the segmental basically includes sounds contrast in words, pronunciation of vowel and consonant phonemes (Maniruzzaman, 2008). The phonemes which are not available in the learner's mother tongue and problematic to him/her should receive special treatment in the teaching materials and methodology and sufficient room in the learner's practice (*ibid*).

The suprasegmentals are comprised of stress in words and connected speech, rhythm, pitch, loudness, length, quality, tone and intonation that play an essential and natural role in English speech production and perception (Roach, 2001; Ladefoged, 2000). As the Bengali speaking learner's mother tongue is syllable timed whereas English is stress timed, he/she inevitably finds mastering English pronunciation a very complicated task (Maniruzzaman, 2010). Hence, the differences in suprasegmentals between the learner's mother tongue and the target language are momentous topics that he/she should not only be aware of but should make a conscious effort to study and emphasize (Thompson and Gaddes, 2005). Moreover, the learner should be helped to retrain his/her speech organs which have so long been trained naturally and used to articulate the sounds in his/her L1 (Maniruzzaman, 2008). This tremendously helps him/ her to comfortably and sufficiently use his/her articulators so as to produce the sounds of the target language in an intelligible manner (*ibid*).

### **2.3 Scenario of Teaching English Pronunciation beyond Bangladesh**

Wei (2006) aptly points out that English pronunciation is still neglected in EFL/ESL classrooms throughout the world including Asia today. One of the reasons for this

neglect is because not many English pronunciation teaching strategies or techniques are available to teachers in the classroom (*ibid*).

In China, an English phonetics course is simply left to chance or given no place at all in English teaching and learning (Cheng, 1998). A pronunciation course is still only an elective in the universities or colleges in China and many other countries as the curriculum designers have not noticed its importance (Wei, 2006). According to Lin, Fan and Chen (1995), some teachers in Taiwan might argue that English pronunciation is not important at all, for very few tests would require students to show abilities related to pronunciation or speaking. Similarly, English pronunciation is arbitrarily overlooked in Thailand (Wei and Zhou, 2002). Dalton (in Wei, 2006) states that in Mexico, pronunciation is described as “the Cinderella of language”; that means an often low level of emphasis is placed on this very important language skill. Thus, as Derwing (2010) mentions, pronunciation instruction has received less importance from researchers and teachers alike.

#### **2.4 English Pronunciation Teaching in Bangladesh**

In the planning and execution of English teaching in Bangladesh, pronunciation is rarely focused (Akter, 2005). In this connection Amanullah (2007) rightly maintains that teaching pronunciation is not only neglected but also totally absent in the teaching of English in our country. Most of English teachers in Bangladesh do not give any emphasis on pronunciation in their teaching in the class (Alam, 2006). Amin (2004) emphatically puts forward that pronunciation practices are completely neglected even by the English teachers at every level in Bangladesh. Maniruzzaman (2008) claims

that most of the teachers do not have useful strategies or techniques for teaching English pronunciation; as a result, when they meet a specific problem, they simply avoid pronunciation instruction in the classroom by employing shrewd tricks.

English language syllabi and evaluation in Bangladesh often focus on macro skills (such as writing and speaking) ignoring the underlying micro-skills (such as pronunciation) required to reach the goal (Akter, 2005). The need for students' oral competency is talked about but not realistically aimed at (*ibid*). Akter (2007) claims that textbooks frequently lead to oral communication practice, but to attain the objective, specific tasks of pronunciation are hardly made explicit.

Maniruzzaman (2008) states it is a fact that a substantial number of people (of course more than fifty percent in Bangladesh) currently working as English curriculum/ syllabus designers, materials developers, educators, classroom teachers and test writers/ question setters in EFL settings have either literature background or insufficient training in ELT. As a result, they tactfully avoid and/or consciously exclude English pronunciation items from the syllabus, the material, and instructions of classroom activities (*ibid*). Akter (2007) points out some people do not find a need for teaching pronunciation.

## **2.5 Phonetic and Phonological Problems Faced by Bengali Speaking Learners**

While learning the pronunciation of a second language, the learners often face different phonetic and phonological problems that definitely hinder their learning and



ultimately prevent them from acquiring expected general proficiency in the oral auditory skills of the target language (Maniruzzaman, 2006a). This phenomenon is also evident in the learning of pronunciation of English as a foreign language (EFL) by the Bengali speaking learners (*ibid*). From the phonetic and phonological standpoint, the Bengali speaking EFL learners usually face difficulties in, firstly, ‘speech production’ encompassing which articulator(s) to use, how to pronounce which speech sound and how to pattern speech sounds to convey meaning and, secondly, in ‘speech perception’ including how to receive which speech sound(s) to perceive meaning. The difficulties certainly have seriously negative impact on their acquiring the speaking and listening skills of EFL (*ibid*).

The English language possesses twelve monophthongs or pure vowels – five long / i: ɜ: ɔ: u: / and seven / ɪ e ɒ æ ʊ / (Baker, 2006). Mostafa (2010) points out that due to the different phonetic patterns of Bangla and English languages, speakers of Bangla language are supposed to confront some difficulties in pronouncing certain English phonemes. They generally find the five long monophthongs / i: ɜ: ɔ: u:/ of the English language seriously problematic since these simple vowels are not available in their mother tongue and they are not accustomed to differentiating between short and long monophthongs (Maniruzzaman, 2010). To emphasize a point or express various emotional effects, Bengali vowels are lengthened to some degree. But vowel length in the Bengali language is phonetic, not phonological (*ibid*). Besides, the Bengali speakers cannot easily and authentically pronounce schwa / ə / since this phoneme is absent from their first language (*ibid*). Moreover, they can hardly differentiate between /e/ and /æ/ as in ‘men’ and

‘man’ respectively because this differentiation is not so much exercised in Bengali(*ibid*).

Mostafa (2010), states that the Bengali speaking learners also suffer difficulty in pronouncing English diphthongs due to their mother tongue interference. The English language has eight diphthongs /ɪə e ʊə aɪ ɔɪ eɪ əʊ əʊ/, each of which is a combination of two monophthongs one gliding into the other and naturally longer than a pure vowel ( Maniruzzaman, 2006b). On the other hand, the Bengali language possesses eighteen regular diphthongs which are characteristically different from English ones (Maniruzzaman, 2010). As a consequence, the Bengali speaking learners pronounce only the first part of a diphthong and make it identical to a monophthong, for example ‘late’ /leɪt/ being pronounced like ‘let’ /let/ (*ibid*). In this connection, Hasan (2000: 66) rightly comments:

They mispronounce most of the English diphthongs; they fail to give these sounds their due length as they often pronounce only the first element of the sound and pay no heed to the second, thus the English diphthongs cease to be gliding sounds in their pronunciation, e.g. for English /eɪ/ and /əʊ/, they generally use the Bangla pure vowels /e/ and /o/ respectively.

Maniruzzaman (2010) argues that this type of replacement of phonemes in the English certainly results in huge confusion and misunderstanding. The problems that the Bengali speaking learners confront in the pronunciation of English monophthongs and diphthongs evidently affect their auditory and perceptive ability and hence reduce their capability of listening (*ibid*). Bengali speaking learners also face problems in pronouncing some English consonants such as / p t d k f v ð z d w j /

(*ibid*). This is because these consonants are not available in their mother language, and on the other hand, the learners do not have sufficient opportunity for practicing the sounds in the class (*ibid*).

Stress and intonation are two essential aspects of the pronunciation of English words and utterances (Maniruzzaman, 2006a). As the Bengali speaking learner's mother tongue is syllable timed whereas English is stress timed, he/she inevitably finds mastering English pronunciation a very complicated task (Maniruzzaman, 2008). On the other hand, intonation basically resulting from the rising and falling of the tone accompanied by relatively greater degree of loudness and length plays varied unavoidable functions in the English language, such as attitudinal, accentual, grammatical and discourse functions which have limited importance in the Bengali language (*ibid*). Due to mother tongue interference and inadequate training, the Bengali speaking learner of EFL can hardly master English intonation, and his/her speech therefore sounds unnatural and even unintelligible (*ibid*).

## **2.6 The Importance of Pronunciation Teaching**

Pronunciation is an integrated and integral part of second/foreign language learning since it directly affects learners' communicative competence as well as performance to a substantial extent (Wei, 2006; Maniruzzaman, 2008). Hismanoglu (2006) emphatically puts forward that without adequate pronunciation skills, the learner's ability to communicate is severely limited. Pronunciation has an important social value (Gelvanovsky, 2002), which means that it should be related to prestige. Hayati (2010) argues that a very important factor influencing the value of correct

pronunciation arises from the society's needs and attitudes. Maniruzzaman (2008) emphasizes that pronunciation is definitely the biggest thing that people notice when a person is speaking. Akter (2008) and Mahfuz and Flora (2009) consider pronunciation an important component of speaking skills. Fraser (2000: 7) explains that being able to speak English includes a number of sub-skills; of which pronunciation is "by far the most important" (other sub-skills of speaking include vocabulary, grammar, and pragmatic). She argues that "with good pronunciation, a speaker is intelligible despite other errors; with poor pronunciation, a speaker can be very difficult to understand, despite accuracy in other areas" (*ibid*). In this connection, Tench (in Maniruzzaman, 2006a: 45-46) rightly maintains:

Pronunciation is not an optional extra for the language learner, any more than grammar, vocabulary or any other aspect of language is. If a learner's general aim is to talk intelligibly to others in another language, a reasonable pronunciation is important.

Therefore, pronunciation is undoubtedly one of the most significant and inevitable parts of teaching English in particular and any other language in general (Hayati, 2008). Similarly, Hismanoglu (2006) believes that pronunciation teaching is a prominent factor in foreign language teaching. Harmer (2001) holds that pronunciation teaching not only makes students aware of different sounds and their features, but can also improve their speaking immeasurably. So, based on the above literature it seems that English pronunciation should be given due importance in the overall teaching and learning process.

## 2.7 Pronunciation and CLT

Students' performance in English pronunciation might reach teachers' expectation if instruction in pronunciation operates as an integral part of instruction in oral communication (Morley, 1991: 496). The goal of pronunciation should be changed from the attainment of 'perfect' pronunciation to the more realistic goals of developing functional intelligibility, communicability, increased self-confidence, the development of speech monitoring abilities and speech modification strategies for use beyond the classroom (Morley, 1991: 500). The overall aim of these goals is for the learner to develop spoken English that is easy to understand, serves the learner's individual needs, and allows a positive image of himself as a speaker of a foreign language (Hismanolgu, 2006). The learner needs to develop awareness and monitoring skills that will allow learning opportunities outside the classroom environment (*ibid*). The communicative approach to pronunciation teaching requires teaching methods and objectives that involve the learner in active interaction (Morley, 1991: 501). According to Morley (1991), there are three important dimensions the teacher should emphasize in any pronunciation program; the learner's intellectual involvement, affective involvement, and physical involvement.

The learner's involvement in the learning process has been noted as one of the best techniques for developing learner strategies, that is, the measures used by the learner to develop his language learning (Morley, 1991: 506). It is the teacher's responsibility to develop the learning process so the learner has the greatest chance to develop the learning strategies that are unique to each individual learner. The teacher also has a special role to play in the communicative learning program, a role that Morley

describes as one of ‘speech coach or pronunciation coach’ (Morley, 1991: 507). Rather than just correcting the learner’s mistakes, the ‘speech coach’ supplies information, gives models from time to time, offers cues, suggestions and constructive feedback about performance, sets high standards, provides a wide variety of practice opportunities, and overall supports and encourage the learner (*ibid*). It can be seen the teacher’s role is not only to teach but to facilitate learning by monitoring and modifying English at two levels, speech production and speech performance (*ibid*).

## **2.8 Background of English Language in Bangladesh**

This study has covered pronunciation skills of English language, that is why it is important to know how this language was introduced and became important in Bangladesh.

In the Indian subcontinent the use of English commenced through British colonialism about two hundred years ago (Das, 2009). At the initial stage, the reasons behind using English were linked with business among the people of different linguistic backgrounds (Rahman, 1999). With the development of business and communication, the demand of using English rapidly grew and gradually it became the medium of communication in the field of education, administration, politics and so on (Das, 2009). English was used as the official language of law courts in 1837 and in 1844; it was declared that in case of recruitment, competent English language users would be given preference (Rahman, 1999). This declaration immensely influenced the educational institutions like colleges, universities, madrasas and so forth (Rahman,

1999). English was firmly established as the academic and official language of India at the beginning of twentieth century and continued until 1947 (*ibid*).

After the partition of India and Pakistan in 1947, English continued to play a very important role in multilingual West and East Pakistans (Das, 2009). The language movement for the status of Bangla language infused a strong feeling of linguistic nationalism among Bengalis and at the end government had to accept Bangla as one of the state languages; despite such a scenario, English retained the same power and position in the field of education, administration and politics in West and East Pakistan from 1947 to 1971 (*ibid*). During this period, English was taught as a second language (Das, 2009).

After the independence of Bangladesh in 1971, the position of English seriously suffered because of the strong nationalistic sentiment for the Bangla language (Rahman, 1999). Bangla was given the status of official language and made the medium of instruction in 1972 (Ara, 2009). Because of the government declaration and constitutional recognition, Bangla began to be used in almost every sectors of national life and at the same time, English came to be treated as a foreign language (Rahman, 1999). Even now, English is being taught as a foreign language at different levels of education (Ara, 2009).

## 2.9 English Language Teaching Policy in Bangladesh

In 1976, to assess the English Language Teaching (ELT) situation in Bangladesh an English Language Teaching Task Force was set up by the Ministry of Education (Das, 2009). Das (2009: 42-45) mentions that this Task Force gave the following points for the poor teaching condition of Bangladesh:

1. Lack of helpful textbooks;
2. Great shortage of qualified teachers of English at all levels of education;
3. Big size of the class;
4. Defective examination system.

In 1990, a survey report of National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) gave a frustrating picture of English proficiency among learners because it found that according to result majority of the students are not achieving satisfactory levels of proficiency in learning English language (Ara, 2009). Until 1980 English was taught as a compulsory subject in BA Honors and Pass Course, but it discontinued (*ibid*). However, in 1992 Bangladesh Government passed an act to reintroduce English as a compulsory subject for all BA Honors and Pass Course students (Rahman, 1999). The National Committee on Education Policy 1997 (Das, 2009) proposed four year degree course and one year master's course at tertiary level.

Since the independence of Bangladesh many policies keep changing regarding the teaching and learning of English (Ara, 2009). Ara (2009) mentions that since 1991, NCTB has also been trying to improve the quality of English language teaching in Bangladesh, but unfortunately none of the policies helped the students to develop



their proficiency in the English language. Jahan (2008) argues that after learning English for 13 to 15 years the students of the Bangladesh cannot communicate in English. In this regard Bhattacharjee (2008) blames the recurrent changes in the curriculum and over emphasis on Bangla.

## **2.10 The State of Public University**

Azim (2009), points out that the first public university, the University of Dhaka, was introduced in Bangladesh in 1921. At that time, it was expected that it would provide good quality education to the students (Azim, 2009). According to the website of UGC ([www.ugc.gov.bd](http://www.ugc.gov.bd)) there are 31 public universities in Bangladesh. The public universities run with government money; so that meritorious and economically insolvent students get higher education there (Azim, 2009). Public universities are not well equipped with modern technologies and facilities (*ibid*). As a result, students do not get better chance to do research and to conduct activity- based classes (*ibid*). According to Azim (2009), almost 70% students of the tertiary education study in the public universities but unfortunately public universities seem to lose appeal to the common people because of student's politics, political influence, session jam and mismanagement of the authorities.

## **2.11 The Emergence of Private Universities**

The government gave approvals to private universities through the private university Act 1992 and made some changes in 1998 to pave the way of other private universities in Bangladesh (Quase, 2005). According to the website

([www.ugc.gov.bd](http://www.ugc.gov.bd)) of the University Grant Commission (UGC) there are 56 private universities in Bangladesh. There are many reasons behind the establishment of the private universities (Quase, 2005). There is scarcity of seats in the government universities (*ibid*). Quase (2005) mentions that with the establishment of private universities, students get the opportunity for higher education in Bangladesh and they hardly think of going to abroad for higher studies. Private universities offer job market oriented academic programs and subjects like BBA<sup>1</sup>, CSE<sup>2</sup>, ECE<sup>3</sup>, EEE<sup>4</sup>, Pharmacy, BTE<sup>5</sup> and so on (Rahman, 2005).

The study environment of private universities is free of political influence (Azim 2009). There is no session jam, and students can easily complete their academic study within a fixed time (Quase, 2005). In private universities students get opportunity to get familiar with actual working conditions (Azim, 2009). They have to write reports, give presentations, and submit projects assignments where teaching system is the combination of theory and practice (*ibid*). Most of the private universities are well equipped with modern technologies and facilities like computer labs, multimedia projectors, OHP and so on (Azim, 2009).

The most negative aspect of the private universities may be their high tuition fees (Azim, 2009). In this regard, Quase (2005) points out that it is a misconception that private universities are charging higher tuition fees. He also shows the reasons such as

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<sup>1</sup> Bachelor of Business Administration

<sup>2</sup> Computer Science and Engineering

<sup>3</sup> Electrical and Computer Engineering

<sup>4</sup> Electrical and Electronics Engineering

<sup>5</sup> Bio-Technology and Engineering

most of the private universities are in high- rated rented buildings and provide the facilities of air-conditioned classrooms, computer labs, resourceful libraries, and high salary for the faculty members and so forth (*ibid*). Besides these, almost all the universities have the system of providing 10-100% scholarship for the students (*ibid*). Quase (2005) thinks that as the private universities do not get any kind of financial support from the government or Universities Grants Commission (UGC), they have no alternative way other than charging fees from their students. Azim (2009), argues that public universities' students in Bangladesh get much subsidy from the government but private university students have to pay a lot money for their education.

Another complaint against the private universities is about the outer campuses (Quase, 2005). In this regard Quase (2005) thinks that, private universities should not be restricted to only Dhaka city; they should extend their campuses to all over the country. Quase (2005) recommends that outer campuses should be established by following the rules and regulation of UGC.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

The research methodology adopted for carrying out this study comprises research design, theoretical framework, sampling, setting, instrument, data collection and data analysis procedures and obstacles encountered.

#### **3.2 Design of the Study**

The objective of this study is to emphasize teaching English pronunciation at the tertiary level especially in the department of English. It would take account of the extent to which pronunciation is taught, and while teaching/learning pronunciation what types of problem English teachers and learners face and how they can overcome those problems. This research is quantitative and qualitative in nature. The data was collected from 10 private and public universities through interviews and open ended questionnaire. 30 teachers were interviewed and 160 students were given questionnaire. The setting of data collection was formal. Dalton and Sheildhofer's (1994) Bottom-up and Top-down approaches were used to analyze the data.

#### **3.3 Theoretical Framework**

To analyze the data, two approaches were used, 'bottom-up' and 'top-down' approaches for teaching English pronunciation by Dalton and Sheildhofer (1994). The 'bottom-up approach' begins with the articulation of individual sounds or phonemes and works up towards stress, rhythm, tone and intonation (*ibid*). On the other hand,

‘top-down approach’ starts with patterns of intonation and brings separate sounds or phonemes into sharper focus as and when required (*ibid*). According to Dalton and Seidlhofer (1994), the ‘bottom-up approach’ is based on the idea that if the segmental are taught first, the suprasegmentals will subsequently be acquired without the need of formal instruction whereas the ‘top-down approach’ rests the assumption that once the suprasegmentals features are in place, the necessary segmental discriminations will follow accordingly. The bottom-up approach and the top-down approach respectively correspond to the traditional approach and the research-based approach propounded by Scarcella and Oxford (in Maniruzzaman, 2008: 8). While the traditional approach is concerned with isolated sounds and native like pronunciation, the research-based approach deals with suprasegmental features and targets at communication (Maniruzzaman, 2008). That is, the top-down or research-based approach is concerned with intelligible pronunciation. According to Morley (1991:488), “intelligible pronunciation is an essential component of communication competence”.

However, the present study used Dalton and Seidlhofer’s (1994) bottom-up/traditional and top-down/research approaches to analyze the collected data. It was aimed to find out whether teachers followed only bottom-up or top-down approach, or combined both of the approaches in teaching English pronunciation at the tertiary level.

### **3.4 Sampling**

According to the website of UGC ([www.ugc.gov.bd](http://www.ugc.gov.bd)) there are 31 public and 56 private universities in Bangladesh. Among the universities, 11 public and 45 private universities have specific English departments. But in Dhaka division there are four

public and 36 private universities having English departments and from them two public and eight private universities were conducted for this present study. 30 teachers and 160 students were contacted through interview and questionnaire. The teacher participants were those who teach the courses on English Phonetics and Phonology, English Listening and Speaking Skills, Fundamental/Basic English, Remedial English and so on. They were interviewed at their convenient time. Contrariwise, the student participants were those who had already studied some courses related to English pronunciation. The researcher collected data from students presented in the class.

### **3.5 Setting**

The data of this study were collected in the formal settings. In the classroom, questionnaires were provided to the students. Students' questionnaire survey was done after the class. Teachers' interviews were taken in their office room at their convenient time. Therefore, in both cases settings were formal. Because of the formal setting the researcher in some cases did not get authentic information from the respondents.

### **3.6 Instrumentation**

The survey has been conducted through interview questions (Appendix-A) and a questionnaire (Appendix-B). The interviews with the teachers are based on a structured process including seven specific items. The interview questions one, two, three, four and seven (Appendix-A) are related to the first central research question (To what extent is English pronunciation taught at the undergraduate level of English departments at the private and public universities?). On the other hand the interview

questions five and six (Appendix- B) are related to the second central research question (What problems do the teachers face in teaching English pronunciation at the tertiary level?). The first interview question was asked to know the courses that are offered by the English department on English pronunciation. The second question looked at the importance/need of teaching English pronunciation to the students. Question number three and four were aimed to reveal how much teachers emphasize on pronunciation and what activities they do in teaching pronunciation. Questions five and six were set to find out the kind of materials that are used and the problems teachers face while teaching English pronunciation in the class. The last question was asked to gather teachers' opinions regarding further improvement of their students' English pronunciation.

The questionnaire (Appendix- B) for students comprised eight open ended items. Questions one, two, three, four, five and eight (Appendix-B) are related to the first central research question (To what extent is English pronunciation taught at the undergraduate level of English departments at the private and public universities?).

On the other hand, questions six and seven are related (Appendix-B) to the third central research question (What problems do the students face in learning English pronunciation at the tertiary level?). Question one was set to know whether English pronunciation is important or not. The second question aimed to reveal what opportunities the students have in learning English pronunciation. Questions three and four looked at English pronunciation courses and suggested books. The fifth question looked at how students try to improve their English pronunciation. Questions six and

seven were prepared to know whether they enjoy their teacher's teaching of English pronunciation and the problems they have in learning English pronunciation. The last question provides the students with a chance of expressing their opinion of improving their pronunciation.

### **3.7 Data Collection Procedure**

As mentioned earlier, data were collected through interviews and questionnaire. At first permission was sought formally from the heads of the English departments and the teachers to collect data. The researcher also used his personal contacts to gather the data. The teachers were contacted individually. They were interviewed at their appointed time. The interviews were recorded with their permission. It was assured to the interviewers that their identities would be kept confidential. It took almost fifteen to twenty minutes to interview each teacher.

After interviewing teachers, the researcher started to survey the students. The class teacher introduced the researcher with students and told them the researcher's purpose, and left the class. After the class, the researcher distributed the photocopies of the questionnaire among the students inside the classroom. He explained each question to the students and told them to ask him if they could not understand. The students were requested to write answer of the questionnaire (Appendix-B). The students were assured that their identities would be kept hidden.



### **3.8 Data Analysis Procedure**

In this study, the data was collected from teachers and students of two public and eight private universities. After collecting data they were analyzed and tabulated. The collected data from the teachers and the students were presented in two separate tables. First the researcher compiled the teachers' responses according to the serial number. Later individual response of the teachers was summarized and arranged in a table. Total responses of the teachers for each item were counted with percentage and listed in another table. Then they were analyzed based on the theoretical framework as well as according to the central research questions. In the same way, the researcher also analyzed the students' responses.

### **3.9 Obstacle Encountered**

The researcher was fortunate enough to collect data for his study in a smooth, comfortable and satisfactory manner. This is due to his personal acquaintance with the teachers. In other words, he hardly experienced any difficulty in collecting the data.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the results of the present study concerned with teaching English pronunciation at the tertiary level in Bangladesh. Though some courses related to English pronunciation are offered at the tertiary level in the English departments at the universities in Bangladesh, students get little opportunity to practise English pronunciation, and hence have problems with it. Therefore, this study was conducted to examine the extent to which English pronunciation is taught and while teaching/ learning pronunciation what types of problems teachers and learners face at the undergraduate level of the English departments at public and private universities in Bangladesh.

As mentioned earlier, the present study is quantitative and qualitative in nature. Data was collected from two public and eight private universities in Dhaka division. The data was gathered from 30 teachers and 160 students.

#### **4.2 Results of the Teachers' Interview**

In this section, the responses of the 30 teachers are summarized in Table 4.1 and then they are analyzed and explained. The questions are sequentially analyzed and discussed on the basis of the findings.

**Table- 4.2**

**Summary of the Teachers' Responses to the Interview**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Q1. What course in English pronunciation does your department offer for your students?</b>	<b>Q2 Do you think your students need to be taught in English pronunciation? Why?</b>	<b>Q3. How much do you emphasize English pronunciation in your teaching?</b>	<b>Q4. What kind of activities do you do in the classroom for teaching English pronunciation?</b>	<b>Q5 Do you have sufficient materials for teaching English pronunciation to your students? What kind of materials do you use in the classroom?</b>	<b>Q6 What problems do you face in teaching English pronunciation to your students?</b>	<b>Q7. What can be done to improve English pronunciation of your students?</b>
R1	21 (70%) teachers have said that English departments offer 'English Phonetics & Phonology' course on English pronunciation	3(10%) teachers say 'Yes', pronunciation makes some one comprehensive to others.	13(43.33%) teachers emphasize 'much' on English pronunciation in their teaching.	5(16.66%) teachers show picture of speech organs, IPA phoneme chart and ask students to practice transcription and pronounce orally.	8(26.66%) teachers point out that they have not sufficient materials .They use books, audio CD & dictionary.	8(26.66%) teachers say that students have L1 interferences & dialectical problems.	6(20%) teachers say that they require more materials and extend 'Eng. Phonetics & phonology' course for more than one semester and practice session should be more.
R2	3(10%) teachers have said that department offers only 'Basic English' course which is related to English pronunciation.	4(13.33%) teachers say 'Yes', pronunciation makes some one smart in speaking.	9(30%) teachers emphasize 'little' (to some extent) on English pronunciation in their teaching.	6(20%) teachers ask students to imitate their pronunciation while speaking and read aloud and eventually students are given feedback.	2(6.66%) teachers say that they have materials which are to some extent sufficient.	4(13.33%) teachers state that lack of courses on pronunciation.	6(20%) teachers suggest that they need extra more class on pronunciation practice and test students' performance and allocate marks.
R3	4(13.33%) teachers state that they have no specific course on pronunciation rather 'Communication Skills: Listening & Speaking Skills'.	2(6.66%) teachers say 'Yes', for getting good job.	8(26.66%) teachers emphasize to considerable extent on English pronunciation in their teaching.	5(16.66%) teachers ask students to listen to CD, offer presentation and give feedback.	10(33.33%) teachers claim that they have no sufficient materials.	2(6.66%) teachers say that they have large class size.	6(20%) teachers say that specific course on English pronunciation should be offered by the department.

R4	2(6.66%) teachers state that they have no specific course on pronunciation rather 'Developing English Language skills.'	12(40%) teachers say 'Yes', pronunciation is important for successful/better communication.	-	7(23.33%) teachers teach Eng. phonetics & phonology rules and ask them to practice transcription and pronounce orally.	2(6.66%) teachers say that they have not sufficient materials. They use IELTS CD for practice pronunciation.	2(6.6%) teachers say that students have mainly L1 interference problems.	2(6.66%) teachers suggest that they need language lab and more practice session on pronunciation for the students.
R5	-	7(23.33%) teachers response 'Yes', for improving speaking skills.	-	4(13.33%) teachers offer presentation and give feedback to some extent.	2(6.66%) teachers claim that they have not sufficient materials. They use audio CD & picture of vocal organ.	7(23.33%) teachers point out that they have lack materials, time & suitable environment.	3(10%) teachers suggest for more exposure and give feedback.
R6	-	2(6.66%) teachers response 'yes', to communicate correctly with native	-	1(3.33%) teachers ask students to practice English phonemes orally and tongue twister.	1(3.33%) teachers say that they have not sufficient materials. They use audio CD & IPA chart.	5(16.66%) teachers claim that they have semester time constrain and this is why they cannot take extra class for pronunciation practice	7(23.33%) teachers say that 'English Phonetics & Phonology' course should be extended based on practice.
R7	-	-	-	1(3.33%) teachers offer students for role play, debate, presentation and give feedback.	3(10%) teachers put forward that they don't have sufficient materials. They IPA chart & picture of the vocal organs.	2(6.66%) teachers say that students feel shy and they have L1 interference and dialectical problems.	-
R8	-	-	-	1(3.33%) teachers offer students minimal pairs, drilling and tongue twister.	2(6.66%) teachers say that that don't have sufficient materials .They audio, video CD & books.	-	-

In response to the first question (Table 4.2), 21 (70%) teachers said that English departments offer 'English Phonetics & Phonology' course which is related to English pronunciation. Three (10%) teachers said that they do not have any course related to English pronunciation except 'Basic English' which gives a little opportunity for pronunciation practice. Four (13.33%) teachers said that they do not have any specific course on English pronunciation. But they have a course 'Communication Skills: Listening & Speaking' where pronunciation hardly receives sufficient importance in teaching and learning. Similarly, two (6.66%) teachers said that they do not have any particular course on English pronunciation except 'Developing English Language Skills' where pronunciation teaching is rarely focused. From the findings it appears that most of the English departments offer 'English Phonetics & Phonology' where pronunciation is also taught while some do not.

In response to the second question (Table 4.2), three (10%) teachers said 'yes', pronunciation helps a person communicate with others. Four (13.33%) teachers said that to make someone smart in speaking, pronunciation is required. Two (6.66%) teachers believed that pronunciation is important for getting good job. To 12 teachers (40%), pronunciation is important for better communication. However, seven teachers (23.33%) said that for improving speaking skills pronunciation is needed, whereas two (6.66%) others believe that to communicate correctly with native speakers, English pronunciation is required. It seems that all the teachers realize the importance of teaching English pronunciation to their students.

In response to the third question (Table 4.2), 13 (43.33%) teachers emphasized English pronunciation to a greater extent in their teaching, eight (26.66%) to a considerable extent,

and nine (30%) to some extent. The findings tend to point out that most of the teachers emphasize English pronunciation in their teaching.

In reply to the fourth question (Table 4.2), five (16.66%) teachers said that they show picture of the speech organs, IPA chart and ask students to practice transcription and pronounce orally. Six (20%) teachers ask students to imitate their pronunciation and read aloud as well as give them feedback. Five (16.66%) teachers ask students to listen to audio CD and offer presentations while they (teachers) give feedback. Seven (23.33%) teachers teach phonetics & phonology rules and ask them to practise transcription and pronounce orally. Four (13.33%) teachers observe presentation and give feedback to some extent. One (3.33%) teacher asks students to practise English phonemes orally and tongue twister. One (3.33%) teacher offers role play, debate, presentation and gave feedback on their performances while another teacher (3.33%) asks students to do minimal pairs, drilling and tongue twisters. From the responses it appears that teachers use various activities such as showing the picture of speech organs and IPA chart, practicing transcription, minimal pairs, drilling, tongue twisters, presentations, role plays and telling them to imitate teachers' pronunciation. Such activities are related to Dalton and Sheidhofer's (1994) 'bottom-up' and 'top-down' approaches. 'The 'bottom-up approach' begins with the articulation of individual sounds or phonemes and works up towards stress, rhythm, tone and intonation (Dalton & Sheidhofer, 1994). On the other hand, 'top-down approach' starts with patterns of intonation and brings separate sounds or phonemes into sharper focus as and when required (*ibid*).

In response to the fifth question (Table 4.2), eight (26.66%) teachers informed that they do not have sufficient materials; they use a few books, audio CD and dictionaries for teaching

English pronunciation to their students. Two (6.66%) teachers have materials which are to some extent sufficient. 10 (33.33%) teachers claimed that they do not have sufficient materials. Two (6.66%) teachers claimed that they do not have sufficient materials; they use audio CD and picture of speech organs while other two (6.66%) teachers use only audio CD. One (3.33%) teacher informed that he does not have enough materials; he uses audio CD and IPA phonemes' chart. Three (10%) teachers said that they do not have adequate materials; they use IPA chart and picture of the speech organs. Two (6.66%) teachers said that they do not have sufficient materials; they use audio, video CD and books. It is assumed that the teachers use some materials for teaching English pronunciation to their students because the materials are not adequate.

In reply to the sixth question (Table 4.2), eight (26.66%) teachers said that students have L1 and dialectical problems. Six (20%) teachers identified that the students do not have enough courses on English pronunciation. Two (6.66%) teachers said that students have mainly L1 interference problems. To Seven (23.33%) teachers, lack of materials, time and suitable environment are major problems. Five (16.66%) teachers said that because of semester system they cannot take extra class on pronunciation. Two (6.66%) teachers said that students feel shy and they have L1 interference, as well as dialectical problems. The findings suggest that most of the teachers face many problems in teaching pronunciation such as students' shyness, their L1 and dialectical interferences, lack of materials and suitable environment, lack of English pronunciation courses as well as and lack of practices.

In response to the seventh question (Table 4.2), six (20%) teachers claim that more materials and further practice sessions are required while seven (23.33%) teachers recommend that the

'English Phonetics and Phonology' course should be extended with sufficient practice sessions for more than one semester. Six (20%) teachers give importance on extra classes on pronunciation practice and tests as well as marks allocation. Six (20%) teachers said that specific course on English pronunciation should be offered by the department. Two (6.66%) teachers suggest that they need language lab and more practice session on pronunciation for the students. Three (10%) teachers believe that students' exposure and feedback are essential in improving pronunciation. The findings thus reveal that most of the teachers suggest to include more courses on English pronunciation with more practice sessions. They further suggest arranging adequate materials as well as testing and allocating marks.

#### **4.3 Results of the Students' Questionnaire**

In this section, the responses of the 160 students are summarized in a Table 4.2 and then analyzed and explained. The questions are sequentially analyzed and discussed on the basis of the findings.



**Table- 4.3**

**Summary of the Students' Responses to the Questionnaire**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Q1. Do you think English pronunciation is important for you? Why?</b>	<b>Q2. What opportunities do you have for learning English pronunciation ?</b>	<b>Q3. What course do you have in English pronunciation?</b>	<b>Q4. What books does your teacher suggest you for learning English pronunciation?</b>	<b>Q5. Do you do anything else to improve your English pronunciation?</b>	<b>Q6. Do you enjoy your teacher's teaching in English pronunciation? Why?</b>	<b>Q7. What problems do you face in learning English pronunciation?</b>	<b>Q8. What else do you think that can be done by your teachers to improve your English pronunciation?</b>
R1	48(30%) yes, for better communication .	5(3.13%) Books, dictionary, CD.	20(12.5%) English Phonetics & Phonology Advanced Speaking & Listening.	47(29.37%) English Phonetics & Phonology, Peter Roach.	8(5%) use Oxford dictionary & books.	13(8.12%) sometimes.	5(3.12%) English vowels & consonants pronouncing problems.	14(8.75%) teacher should understand our problems & give feedback
R2	10(6.25%) yes, to communicate correctly with native.	46(28.75%) Phonetics & Phonology course.	30(18.75%) Introduction to Phonetics & Phonology, Introduction to Linguistics.	7(4.37%) Introduction to English Language Study. M.Maniruzzaman.	23(14.37%) speaking with friends & teachers.	3(1.87%) no.	13(8.12%) Hesitation & shyness	4(2.5%) pronunciation experts should be employed.
R3	16(10%) yes, for getting good job.	34(21.25%) Teachers' English lecture.	20(12.5%) Introduction to Phonetics & Phonology, Listening & Speaking.	32(20%) Ship or Sheep, Ann Baker	15(9.37%) simply yes.	39(24.37%) yes, because teachers' pronunciation is good.	13(8.12%) lack of materials, environment	18(11.25%) arranging language lab & more practice
R4	22(13.75%) yes, to communicate correctly with foreigners	47(29.37%) not enough opportunities.	14(8.75%) English Phonetics & Phonology.	8(5%) A Guide to Correct Speech. SM. Amanullah.	13(8.12%) no.	17(10.62%) yes, they are our model.	4(2.5%) lack of practise	16(10%) more class & more practice on pronunciation

R5	11(6.87%) yes, for becoming smart speaker.	2(1.25%) Listening & Speaking, Phonetics & Phonology course	16(10%) Basic English.	10(6.25%) A Text Book of English Phonetics of English for Indian Students, T.Balashubramanian	61(38.12%) Watch English Movie, Listening to BBC news.	6(3.75%) simply yes.	5(3.12%) don't know the right way of pronunciation	5(3.12%) more equipments & practice
R6	3(1.87%) simply yes.	2(1.25%) class presentation	30(18.75%) English Phonetics & Phonology, Basic English.	8(5%) Better English Pronunciation, Corder.	9(5.62%) practice IPA phonemes/ symbols.	3(1.87%) yes, teacher's class is enjoyable	18(11.25%)conf used of varieties of English accents	35(21.87%) more courses should be offered on pronunciation
R7	2(1.25%) no.	7(4.37%) conversation with classmates & teachers	20(12.5%) Communication Skills: Listening & Speaking, Introduction to Linguistics.	7(4.37%) An Introduction to Language, Fromkin,Rodman, Hyam	3 (1.87%) practice computer Cambridge dictionaries.	10(6.25%) yes, they are understanding	8(5%) no problems.	13(8.12%) teacher should give us more chance for practicing pronunciation
R8	45(28.12%) yes, for improving speaking skills.	11(6.87%) Speaking , Phonetics & Phonology course	10(6.25%) Developing English Language Skills, Introduction to Linguistics.	27(16.87%) not any particular book.	9(5.62%) Listening to IELTS CD & English songs	11(6.87%) yes, but we get little scope for pronunciation practice	2(1.25%) Teachers don't repeat	16(10%) teachers can take extra class on English pronunciation
R9	3(1.87%) yes, for effective communication	6(3.75%) Listening & Speaking course.	-	14( 8.75%) Handout (from different sources).	2(1.25%) looking mirror & Tongue twister.	11(6.87%) yes, because teacher speaks/ pronounces correctly.	24(15%) not enough courses for English pronunciation	9(5.62%) teacher should encourage us to practise pronunciation
R10	-	-	-	-	4(2.50%) listening to English sports commentary & news.	2(1.25%) yes, teachers are helpful, they give feedback	12(7.5%) few classes for English pronunciation practice	6(3.75%) teachers should motivate us for practicing English pronunciation

R11	-	-	-	-	6(3.75%) going to English language institute	16(10%) yes, teacher is very fluent and accurate.	19(11.87%) L1 interference	4(2.50%) teachers should include speaking course in each semester
R12	-	-	-	-	7(4.37%) follow only teachers' English lecture	2(1.25%) yes, teachers are friendly & active	19(11.87%) listening problems	4(2.50%) teachers should emphasize more pronunciation
R13	-	-	-	-	-	3(1.87%) yes, teachers are helpful	9(5.62%) difficult to pronounce according to spelling	7(4.37%) teacher can suggest us to practise pronunciation more
R14	-	-	-	-	-	12(7.50%) yes, teachers are friendly & skilled.	9(5.62%) lots of problems	9(5.62%) pronunciation classes should be practice based.
R15	-	-	-	-	-	9(5.62%) yes, teachers are well skilled.	-	-
R16	-	-	-	-	-	3(1.87%) yes, because teacher has time limit due to semester.	-	-

In response to the first question (Table 4.3), 48 (30%) students said 'yes', pronunciation is important for better communication. 10 (6.25%) students answered 'yes', to communicate correctly with native speakers English pronunciation is required. Sixteen (10%) students gave positive reply for getting good job. 22 (13.75%) students said that it is important to communicate correctly with foreigners. 11 (6.87%) students said 'yes' for becoming a smart speaker. Three (1.87%) students answered simply 'yes' and other two (1.25%) students said simply 'no' but they did not explain. 45 (28.12%) said 'yes' for improving speaking skills. Three (1.87%) students replied positively and said that pronunciation is important for effective communication. It seems that majority of the students believe that English pronunciation is important in the field of communication.

In reply to the second question (Table 4.3), five (3.13%) students have opportunities to use books, dictionary, CD for learning English pronunciation. 46 (28.75%) students have 'English Phonetics & Phonology' course for learning English pronunciation. 34 (21.24%) students receive only listening to teachers' English lecture. 47 (29.37%) students claimed that they do not have enough opportunities for learning English pronunciation. Two (1.25%) students have mentioned two courses 'Listening & Speaking', and 'English Phonetics & Phonology' for learning English pronunciation. Two (1.25%) students said that when they are asked for class presentation, they become aware about their pronunciation. Seven (4.37%) students said that conversation in English with classmates and teachers is an opportunity for learning pronunciation. 11 (6.87%) students have 'Spoken' and 'Phonetics and Phonology' courses for learning English pronunciation. Six (3.75%) students have 'Listening & Speaking' course to learn English pronunciation. From the findings it seems that the opportunities students have for learning English pronunciation are not sufficient.

In reply to the third question (Table 4.3), 30 (18.75%) students have 'Introduction to Phonetics & Phonology' and 'Introduction to Linguistics' courses related to English pronunciation. 40 (25%) students have 'Introduction to Phonetics & Phonology' and 'Listening & Speaking', while 14 (8.75%) students said they have only 'English Phonetics & Phonology' course. 16 (10%) students said that they have no course related to English pronunciation except 'Basic English' and 30 (18.75%) said that they have 'English Phonetics & Phonology', 'Basic English' course related to English pronunciation. 20 (12.5%) students have 'Communication Skills: Listening & Speaking and 'Introduction to Linguistics'. 10 (6.25%) students said that do not have specific course related to English pronunciation except 'Developing English' Language Skills 'and 'Introduction to Linguistics'. From the findings it appears that majority of the students have 'English Phonetics & Phonology' course related to English pronunciation.

**Table- 4.3 (A)**

The responses of the forth question are shown by a table in below.

Number of the students	Number of the students in Percentage	Title of the book	Writer/Author	Year of publication
47	29.37%	<i>English Phonetics and Phonology</i>	Peter Roach	2000
32	20%	<i>Ship or Sheep? An intermediate pronunciation course</i>	Ann Baker	2006 (3 <sup>rd</sup> edition)
27	16.87%	No any specific book.	-	-
10	6.25%	<i>A Text Book of English Phonetics of English for Indian Students</i>	T. Balashubramanian	1981
8	5%	<i>Better English Pronunciation</i>	J.D. O'Connor	1980
7	4.37%	<i>An Introduction to Language</i>	Formkin, Rodman, Hyam	2003
8	5%	<i>A Guide to Correct Speech</i>	SM. Amanullah	2007
7	4.37%	<i>An Introduction to English Language Study</i>	M. Maniruzzaman	2006
14	8.75%	Handout (from different sources)	-	-

From the findings, it seems that most of the suggested books on English pronunciation are theory based while some books are practice based.

In response to the fifth question (Table 4.3), 61 (38.12%) students watch English Movie and listen to BBC news for improving English pronunciation. 23 (14.37%) students practise speaking in English with friends and teachers. 15 (9.37%) students said simply 'yes' but they did not explain. 13 (8.12%) students do not do anything to improve their pronunciation. Nine (5.62%) students practise IPA chart. Three (1.87%) students practise with computer-based Cambridge Dictionaries to develop their English pronunciation. Nine (5.62%) students practise listening with IELTS CDs. eight (5%) students said that to improve their pronunciation they read text books and take help from Oxford dictionaries. Two (1.25%) students practise tongue twister in front of the mirror. Four (2.50%) students said that they practise listening by watching English sports commentary and news programs. Six (3.75%) students said that they go to English language institute and practise English pronunciation. Seven (4.37%) students follow only teachers' English lectures and imitate them. From the responses it appears that the students do various activities such as practicing with Oxford and Cambridge dictionaries and IPA chart; by watching English movies; listening to BBC news, IELTS CDs, teachers' English lecture, English songs and sports commentary. They also practise speaking in English with teachers and classmates for improving their English pronunciation.

In response to the sixth question (Table 4.3), 16 (10%) students said that they enjoy their teachers' teaching 'sometimes' whereas three (1.87%) students said 'no' but they did not explain. 39 (24.37%) students said 'yes' because teachers' pronunciation is good. 17 (10.62%) students responded affirmatively that teachers are their model. Six (3.75%) students said simply 'yes' but they did not explain it. Three (1.87%) students

said 'yes' as they think that their teacher's class is enjoyable. 10 (6.25%) students said 'yes', and explained that their teachers are understanding. 11(6.87%) students said 'yes' but they get little scope for pronunciation practice, while 11(6.87%) said 'yes', because teacher pronounce correctly. Two (1.25%) students said 'yes' because their teachers are helpful and they give feedback. 16 (10%) students responded affirmatively and mentioned that teachers are very fluent and accurate. 26 (16.25%) students said that their teachers are friendly and well skilled in pronunciation. Findings seem to suggest that majority of the students enjoy their teachers' teaching in English pronunciation.

In reply to the seventh question (Table 4.3), five (3.12%) students said that they have problems in pronouncing English vowels and consonants. 13 (8.12%) students have problems because they hesitate and feel shy. 13 (8.12%) students have lack of materials and suitable environment for practicing pronunciation. Four (2.5%) students have problems due to lack of practice. 5 (3.12%) students said that they do not know the right way of pronunciation. 18 (11.25%) students said that they become confused due to various of English accents. Eight (5%) students do not face problems in pronunciation. Two (1.25%) students said that teachers do not repeat. 24 (15%) students claimed that they do not have enough courses for English pronunciation. 12 (7.5%) students said that they have few classes for English pronunciation practice. 19 (11.87%) students have problems due to L1 interference. 19 (11.87%) students think that they have problems in understanding pronunciation. Nine (5.62%) students face difficulties in order to pronounce correctly. Nine (5.62%) students have lots of problems but they do not explain the reasons. The findings tend to point out that students have a number of problems regarding pronunciation due to the lack of courses as well as practice, lack of materials and controlled environment. Students feel shy and they have L1 and dialectical interferences which hinder their English pronunciation.



Regarding question eight (Table 4.3), 14 (8.75%) students said that teachers should understand their problems and give them feedback whereas four (2.5%) students thought that pronunciation experts should be appointed for pronunciation classes. 18 (11.25%) students stressed the need for a language lab, and 16 (10%) students emphasized on more classes to practise English pronunciation. Five (3.12%) students mentioned that they need more materials and practice to improve their English pronunciation. 35 (21.87%) students said that more courses should be offered on English pronunciation. 13 (8.12%) students want more chances to practise pronunciation in the classroom. 16 (10%) students said that teachers can take extra classes on English pronunciation. 23 (14.37%) students said that teacher should encourage them to practise English pronunciation in the classroom. 16 (10%) students said that pronunciation classes should be practise based. From the responses of this question, three important issues are noticed: students need more practice based English pronunciation courses, sufficient materials and specialized teachers who have expertise in English pronunciation.

#### **4.4 Comparison between Teachers' and Students' Responses**

In teachers' and students' responses, some common aspects of teaching and learning English pronunciation at the tertiary level have been identified. From their responses, it is found that both the teachers and the students realize the importance of English pronunciation in communicating with others in real life situation. They also informed that they do not have any specific course on English pronunciation. But, most of the English departments offer a course 'English Phonetics & Phonology' related to English pronunciation.

The problems of teaching and learning English pronunciation encountered by the teachers as well as the students are almost alike. From their responses, it is found that they have many problems such as lack of materials and suitable environment, lack of English pronunciation courses as well as lack of adequate practice sessions for the students. Students feel shy and they have L1 interferences as well as dialectical problems.

Findings explore that both the teachers and the students talked about suggestions and expectations. From their responses, some common issues are identified. They point out that more practice based English pronunciation courses should be offered by English departments. They also suggest for arranging sufficient materials and suitable environment in teaching as well as learning English pronunciation.

#### **4.5 Findings in Terms of the Research Questions**

As mentioned earlier, the present study is concerned with teaching English pronunciation at the tertiary level in Bangladesh. The first research question was designed to examine the extent to which English pronunciation is taught at the undergraduate level of English departments at the private and public universities in Bangladesh. Based on the findings it seems that most of the English departments offer ‘English Phonetics and Phonology’ where English pronunciation is taught. However, English pronunciation teaching is largely confined to different theoretical aspects. Though the teachers realize the importance of English pronunciation, and want to teach it to the students, they cannot satisfactorily teach pronunciation because of the theoretical nature of the courses as well as lack of facilities including materials, environment and so on. Similarly, the students realize the importance of English pronunciation, but do not get sufficient instructions to practice (pronunciation).

However, it was found that the students practise on their own in order to improve their skills in English pronunciation.

The second research question was constructed to reveal the problems the teachers face in teaching English pronunciation. The findings suggest that most of the teachers face many problems in teaching pronunciation such as students' shyness, their L1 and dialectical interferences, lack of materials and suitable environment, lack of English pronunciation courses as well as and lack of practices.

Similarly, the third research question was formulated to disclose the problems the students encounter in learning English pronunciation. From the findings of this study, it was found that although the students enjoy their teachers' teaching, they want specialized teachers who have expertise in English pronunciation. The students further claimed that they do not have enough courses on pronunciation as well as opportunities to practise and develop their pronunciation.

#### **4.6 Discussion of the findings**

Hismanoglu (2006) said that without adequate pronunciation skills, the learner's ability to communicate is severely limited. Similarly, Wei (2006) and Maniruzzaman (2008) said that pronunciation is an integrated and integral part of second/foreign language learning since it directly affects learners' communicative competence as well as performance to a substantial extent. The findings of the present study tend to support the opinions of Hismanoglu (2006); Wei (2006); and Maniruzzaman (2008).

Wei (2006) points out that English pronunciation is still neglected in EFL/ ESL classrooms throughout the world including Asia. One of the reasons for this neglect is because not many English pronunciation teaching strategies or techniques are available to teachers in the classroom (*ibid*). The findings of this study is consistent with those of Wei (2006) as the teachers deal with some theoretical aspects of English pronunciation, and cannot give sufficient attention to arranging pronunciation practice for the students. Hasan (2000), Maniruzzaman (2006a) and Mostofa (2010) argue that Bengali speaking learners face problems in English pronunciation due to their L<sub>1</sub> interferences. From the findings it also seems that the L<sub>1</sub> interferences hinder students' English pronunciation.

According to Dalton and Sheildhofer (1994), there are two approaches (bottom-up and top-down) for teaching English pronunciation. The bottom-up approach begins with the articulation of individual sounds or phonemes and works up towards stress, rhythm, tone and intonation (*ibid*). On the other hand, top-down approach starts with patterns of intonation and brings separate sounds or phonemes into sharper focus as and when required (Dalton and Sheilhofer, 1994). From the findings, it was found that teachers do various activities for teaching English pronunciation in the classroom which are related to Dalton and Sheildhofer's (1994) bottom-up and top-down approaches.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **CONCLUSION**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

The present study deals with teaching English pronunciation at the tertiary level in Bangladesh. The English departments of both private and public universities offer some courses related to English pronunciation where teaching as well as practicing this skill is rarely focused. As a consequence, students get little opportunity to practise English pronunciation and hence have problems with it. Therefore, this study examines the extent English pronunciation is taught at the undergraduate level of the English departments at the private and public universities in Bangladesh. It further looks at the problems the teachers and the students face while teaching and learning English pronunciation.

#### **5.2 Summary of the Findings**

The present study collected data through interview and questionnaire from 30 teachers and 160 students from eight private and two public universities of Dhaka division. From the teachers' and students' responses, it was found that there is no specific course in English pronunciation at the tertiary level. Most of the English departments offer a course 'English Phonetics and Phonology' where English pronunciation is taught but students do not get sufficient practice. On the other hand, while teaching the teachers deal with some theoretical aspects of English pronunciation, and cannot give sufficient attention to arranging pronunciation practice for the students.

Therefore, the teachers as well as the students recommend that practice based courses on English pronunciation should be offered by English departments. They also suggest for arranging sufficient materials and suitable environment in teaching as well as learning English pronunciation.

### **5.3 Contribution to Research**

To date, in the Bangladeshi context some studies have carried out in English pronunciation. But surprisingly, very few researchers have shown interests in conducting studies on teaching English pronunciation at the tertiary level. In this respect the present study is significant. It is hope that both the teachers, students and the research community would be benefited from the findings of this present study.

### **5.4 Practical Implication(s)**

From this research it is hoped that the teachers' community will get valuable information which they can consider in teaching English pronunciation in the classroom. After reading this dissertation, the curriculum/syllabus designers, materials developers, educators, classroom teachers and test writers/question setters will get an idea about the importance of English pronunciation and give proper emphasis on it.

### **5.5 Recommendations**

From the findings of this study, it is found that there is no specific course offered on English pronunciation at the tertiary level in Bangladesh. Hence, English pronunciation practices hardly receive adequate attention in teaching. Therefore, a specific course on English

pronunciation with sufficient practice sessions can be offered by the English departments at the undergraduate level in both public and private universities. The recommended books should be balanced with theoretical and practical aspects of English pronunciation. Materials like computers, more practice based books, audios and videos CDs, head phones, pictures of speech organs, IPA charts should be arranged by English departments to teach pronunciation to the students. They should organize workshops and seminars highlighting teaching English pronunciation. Finally, pronunciation teaching should be as one of the interviewers said 'systematic, gradual, consistent, interesting, practical, and integrated'.

### **5.6 Further/Future studies**

In this research, two public and eight private universities in Dhaka division are selected for collecting data where 30 teachers and 180 students participated. Further research can be done in this area by increasing the data like including more students and teachers or selecting more universities from other divisions of Bangladesh. Furthermore, research can also be done at the tertiary level selecting the National university and Open university of Bangladesh. In this research the data collection instruments were interviews and questionnaire; other instruments can also be used like classroom observation, diary keeping and so on.

### **5.7 Conclusion**

The study has revealed that the English departments at the public and private universities do not offer any specific course in English pronunciation at the undergraduate level. It has also disclosed that the English departments offer courses in 'English Phonetics & Phonology' covering theoretical aspects of pronunciation. As a result, students do not have sufficient

opportunity for practising English pronunciation. Besides, the teachers suffer from lack of materials, courses and infrastructural facilities for teaching English pronunciation. Similarly, the students also suffer from the same problems to practise this skill. Therefore, the present researcher makes suggestion for enhancing facilities for teaching and practising English pronunciation. To do so, relevant courses should be offered, sufficient material should be made available, and infrastructural capability including language labs should be increased.



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## Appendix- A

### Interview Question for the Teachers

1. What course in English pronunciation does your department offer for your students?
2. Do you think your students need to be taught in English pronunciation? Why?
3. How much do you emphasize English pronunciation in your teaching?
4. What kind of activities do you do in the classroom for teaching English pronunciation?
5. Do you have sufficient materials for teaching English pronunciation to your students? What kind of materials do you use in the classroom?
6. What problems do you face in teaching English pronunciation to your students?
7. What can be done to improve English pronunciation of your students?

#### Teacher's Information

(Your personal identity will be kept confidential).

Name:-.....

University:-.....

Designation:-.....

Field of expertise: .....

Degree:-.....

Date: .....

## Appendix-B

### Questionnaire for the Students

Please read carefully the following questions and answer them (use clear hand writing).

1. Do you think English pronunciation is important for you? Why?

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.....  
.....

2. What opportunities do you have for learning English pronunciation?

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3. What course do you have in English pronunciation?

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4. What books does your teacher suggest you for learning English pronunciation?

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5. Do you do anything to improve your English pronunciation?

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6. Do you enjoy your teacher's teaching in English pronunciation? Why?

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7. What problems do you face in learning English pronunciation?

.....  
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8. What else do you think that can be done by your teachers to improve your English pronunciation?

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.....  
.....  
.....

**Student's Information**

(Your personal information will be kept anonymous and will not be used the findings of the dissertation).

Name:.....

University:.....

Semester/year:.....

Course/subject title:.....

Course/subject code:.....

Date:.....

## **BIOGRAPHY**

Md. Amirul Mumeneen completed his BA (Hons.) from Gono Bishwabidyalay and MA in English Language Teaching (ELT) from East West University. He participated in the 5<sup>th</sup> BELTA International Conference, 2011; EWU- THT-BELTA International Seminar, 2011; BELTA National ELT Conference held in Rajshahi University, 2011; and many other local seminars held in Jahangirnagar University, BRAC University, East West University, Gono Bishwabidyalay. He is a very enthusiastic member of BELTA. His area of interest includes Phonetics and Phonology, Sociolinguistics, ELT, Teacher Education.