



INTERNATIONAL
STANDARD
SERIAL
NUMBER
INDIA

2395-2636 (Print):2321-3108 (online)

DEVELOPING ENGLISH COMMUNICATION SKILL OF BANGLADESHI FEMALE DRIVERS: A CASE STUDY

MD MOKARROM HOSSAIN

Lecturer of English, Institute of Modern Language (IML),
Pabna University of Science and Technology
Pabna, Bangladesh
E-mail: mokarromh@gmail.com



ABSTRACT

This paper chiefly discovers the process of developing communication skill where the particular group is Bangladeshi female drivers. It implements some language teaching techniques which ultimately lead to development of proficiency in English. The sharing and results are skimmed for the understanding of such steps in developing driving professionals especially the women. It also paves the way of woman empowerment through career development by increasing communication skill. Targeting English as a door to open the opportunities in home and abroad, the research paper tries to synthesize the impact of Language learning with the professional training.

Keywords: Communication Skill, Female Drivers, English Language learning

©KY PUBLICATIONS

INTRODUCTION

Profession and English have transformed an indispensable part of each other in today's Bangladesh. Due to the impact of globalization and massive participation of women in workforce have turned professionals to practice and learn English. Drivers, a neglected workforce, like wisely when it is especially women, the task seem to be more difficult to adjust with the socio economic culture of Bangladesh. However with a view to upgrade the lifestyle of female personals and make a contribution to the growth of workforce a driving School introduced training for the female drivers. The initiative has been piloted to develop the efficiency of English of these unskilled and semi-literate or little literate drivers to make them efficient in conversation skill so that they can

become globally acceptable workforce to work at home and abroad. As they were roaming around the society with low work or sometime without work they seem to pass their life in a miserable condition while other people being educated conversing the wealth and facilities to impoverish their life style.

English here not only a language but as a basic skill for communication and developing livelihood to maximize the use of female workforce and contribute to the development of the society. This paper shows how the work was done and what changes did it actually made after a short intensive language course.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Women constitute about half of the total population of the country. Apart from the household activities, they are contributing substantially to the

national economy.The majority of women in Bangladesh have yet to be empowered to participate actively in the social, cultural, economic and political life of the country. (Mostafizur&Fardous, 2006)

In Bangladesh, Gender discrimination is common in all stages. But the Constitution of Bangladesh [Article 27,28(1), 28(2), 28(3), and 65(3)] guarantees equal rights to all citizens clearly incorporated provisions for equal status of women. Even in the Article 10 it is mentioned

“Steps shall be taken to ensure participation of women in all spheres of national life.”

In a research it is found that Ethnic minority women are more likely to want to set up or run their own business than White women. Almost twice as many Pakistani (20%) and Bangladeshi (20%) women aspire to be their own boss compared to White women (11%). This finding chimes with official data on women and self-employment, though the figure for White women is higher than current statistics suggest.(Sue Botcherby, 2006).

Teaching English to the female drivers is not very common in perspective of Bangladesh. It's fundamentally a new idea for upbringing poor secluded workforce to make them economically solvent. Widdowson (1981) stated “if a group of learners' need for a language can be accurately specified, then this specification can be used to determine the content of a language program that will meet these needs.”

The fact that necessitated the implementation and procedures of ESP underlies in the better skilled professional persons for enhancing the growth of students. Citing from MOKARROM (2015)

“The fact that necessitated the implementation and procedures of ESP underlies in the better skilled professional persons for enhancing the growth of students. Dewey (1916) believed that the best way to mix life and learning is to integrate the working world with education curriculum. Chin et al (2000) found that students, through work-based learning activities, acquire "knowledge and skills in

particular occupations; providing career exploration and planning; learning all aspects of an industry; improving personal and social competence related to work in general; and enhancing students' academic achievement and motivation through contextual learning.”

BACKGROUND STORY

There has been a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between BRTA (Bangladesh Road Transportation authority) and BRAC Driving School(BDS) to train up 600 female drivers initially. In 2012, they have trained 75 drivers in 4 batches. Already 18 of them are working in different organization.

The assessment for Female English drivers was held at Uttara BRAC Learning Center (BLC) on 31st of July, 2012 by BRAC Institute of languages (BIL). The purpose of the test was to measure the English language proficiency of the participants and to determine process and method to be followed in their English short course training. The test was through written test and interviews of the participants. The participants were divided into two categories:

Type A: These participants have problems in understanding basic questions and answering them. As for example they lack the language skill to respond question like

“Where do you live?” “How are you?” “Can you tell about yourself” or “Do you like driving”? “How can you greet a foreigner?” They need the help of native language to communicate with the interviewers. Their knowledge in English vocabulary and pronunciation is extremely limited. Their spoken score is below 20% mark and the number of the participants is 40 in this category. Out of these 12 participants only 4 participants scored 40% marks and rest of 8 participants got below 40% in their written test .

Type B: These participants can understand English partially and they can respond with words but have the problem in making sentences. Their educational background is S.S.C higher than type A. They can read English but cannot communicate in English properly. Their listening skill is better than the type A. In this category, the number of the student is 35.

In spoken they got above 20% but below 40% mark. In their written test their score in average 20-50% mark

Anticipated Problems for conducting their English Training:

- They will face difficulties in understanding the English instructions in classroom setting as their English level is poor.
 - They may have problem in understanding and acting the dialogues and role plays
- Possible solutions determined at the time of project:

- The classroom instruction in the class will be both mixture of L1 and L2. Teacher will determine where to use which one. The emphasis will be given on L2 so that they can get maximum input of the English language.
- Drills, chunks of English, Role play, dialogues and transport related language will be given preference.
- An Specific English language course will be provided by BRAC Institute of Languages (BIL), BRAC University.

The process how it took place:



Procedure of designing ESP curricula: Litwack, (1979) discussed the following steps in designing ESP curricula: 1) Analyze trainee and job needs; 2) Source classroom material; 3) Write/ edit the material; 4) Write exercises to teach the material; 5) Edit the material; 6) Pilot and revise the material. The plan described by Litwack is followed in designing the course

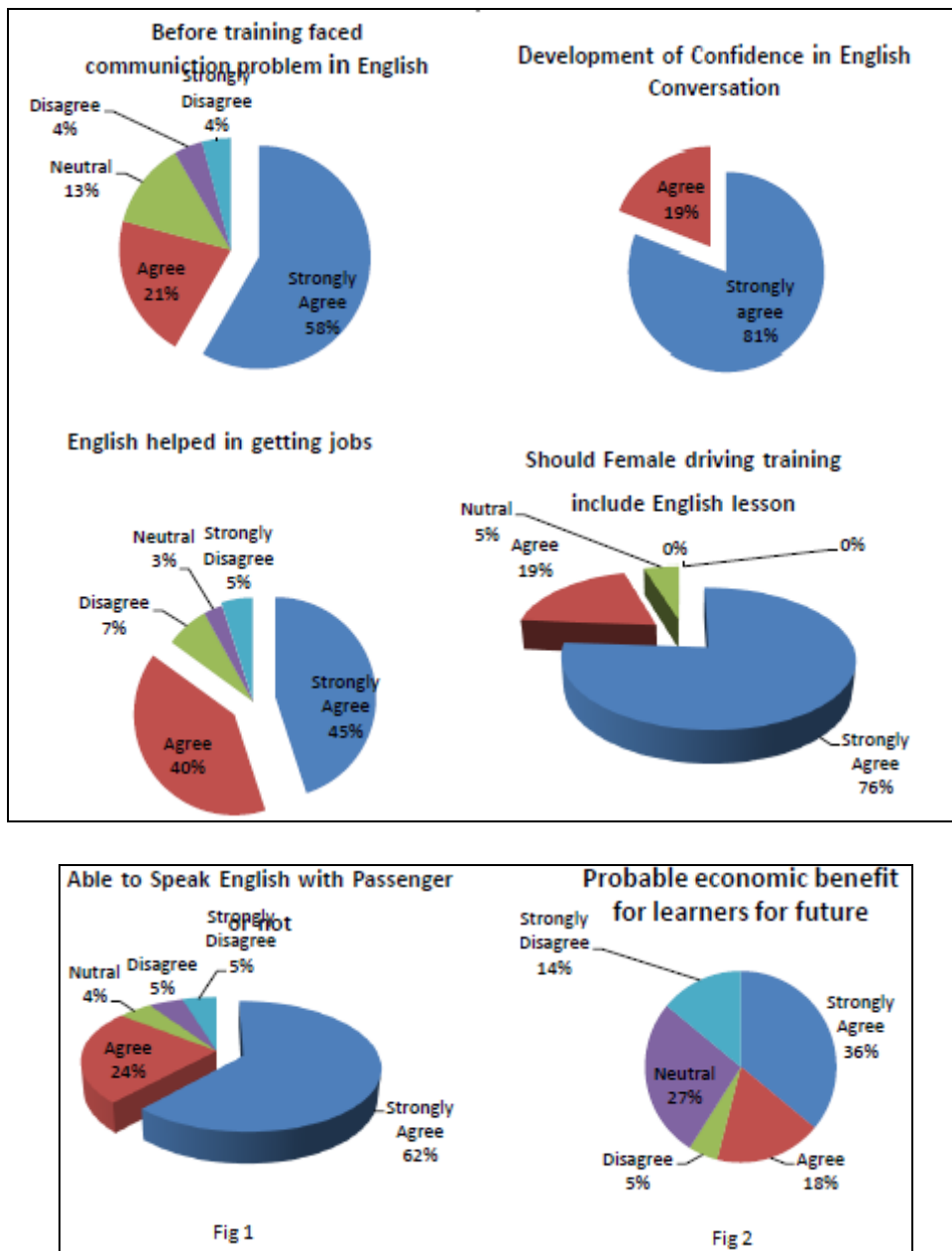
Research Methodology: The questionnaire method has been used for collecting the information for the research. The participants were selected from the population that participated in that particular training. Out of Seventy five participants, thirty participants were selected randomly they were interviewed over the telephone. The population of interest of this study was the participants of the training session. In the September 2012, the participants were interviewed over phone. A five point Likert Scale was used for the scoring purpose. There the respondents had to score each factor on the basis of their level of agreement. The five point scale indicated 1 strongly disagree while 5 meant strongly agree. The other scales ranged between

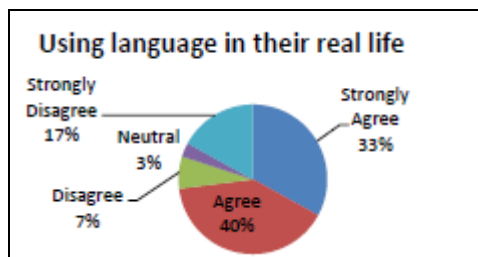
these two. There were also open-ended questions for the participants to provide their ideas about the study. The study discloses both qualitative and quantitative data.

Findings and Evaluation: When it is asked to know, the drivers admitted that they faced communication problem in English before the language training. It is found that 58% strongly agreed that they had problem in communication, while 21% agreed about it and 13% posed neutral position. It is also notable we found different types of communication skill problem of drivers, the time when we did the needs analysis for piloting the project. After the course we wanted to know whether it has developed confidence level in English, 81% agreed about this while we did not find any negative answer in this section. We tried to disclose that does English really help in getting jobs. It has been found that 45% strongly agreed, whereas 6% strongly disagreed with it while 40% agreed, 7% people disagreed in this regard, 4% people are neutral about this. Female driver training should include English language training as we found 76% totally agreed about this

aspect and 5% people holds neutral view. As they need to use English with the passengers, it is found that 62 % passengers able to speak English with passengers and 24% agreed about the thoughts of that they are able to speak English with the passengers and other 10% people are about to disagree about the point. Learning English and using it in their real life especially in their professional life. As their profession will need the practical use of English, they must learn it from the classroom practice. We tried to sort out that do the learner think that this English course will help them in Economic benefit in future. It is found that 36 %

people strongly agreed about but 14 % people disagreed about this matter, 18% people agreed on this term, 27% voted neutral and 5% disagreed on this issue. As a language is about real life practice, we tried to know whether they think they can practice it in real life. We sorted out that 33% strongly agree about this aspect and 40% people agree on this subject. 17% people strongly disagree on this as they think are living in a country where mother tongue has more influence excluding some multinational companies. However they think if they go abroad to work, it will be possible for them to use the language properly.





CHALLENGES AND LEARNING

- Including communication skill development course with the female Drivers is an innovative idea which will ultimately help the drivers to improve their communication skill. It does not only make them locally accepted working force but also gives them an international acceptance to work anywhere of the world.
- As the learners belonged to different ability in language proficiency they need an unified coherent course which can eventually upgrade them to maximize their potentiality to increase their skill to make them efficient in communication and earning their livelihood
- As the learners are poor at minimum reading and speaking skill, there we found drills and repetitions helped to learn the language. Students were reluctant to take any serious job like writing a lot or reading difficult passages. Simply the method that brought the result was drills and repetition.
- Role play activities will bring the real life situation in the classroom practice which can help them to develop their language proficiency.
- Women empowerment includes not only job training but also necessary language improvement for their livelihood.
- To make workforce globally accepted and widely encouraged, the female drivers needs special consideration for both in language and training to make them professionally sound.

CONCLUSION

The working force especially female drivers need communicative English to make them acceptable both in national and international level. Therefore, it shows the paths of a self sufficiency of

neglected workforce of third world. English Language is not only working here as a language but as root to alleviate the poverty of the people.

REFERENCES

- Chin P., Munby, H., Hutchinson, N. L., & Steiner-Bell, K. Post-secondary students' intentions for participating in high school co-operative education programs: A descriptive study. *Journal of Vocational Educational Research*, 25, 2000, 126-154.
- Dewey, John Democracy and Education. ,New York, NY: The Free Press, 1916.
- Government of Bangladesh (GOB), The Constitution of the Peoples' Republic of Bangladesh (Amended till October,1991), Dhaka: Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs. September), 1993.
- Litwack, D. M. Procedure: The key to developing an ESP curriculum. *TESOL Quarterly*, 13, 1979, 383-391.
- Md Mokarrom Hossain, "ESP for Underprivileged TVET Learners: Challenges, Innovations and Perspectives" *The English Literature Journal* Vol. 2, No. 3, 2015 ,366-369,.Web: 08 June 2015
- Md. Mostafizur Rahman Khan & Fardaus Ara, "Women, Participation and Empowerment in Local Government: Bangladesh Union Parishad Perspective," *Asian Affairs*, Vol. 29, No. 1 :73-00, January-March,2006.
- Sue Botcherby "Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black Caribbean women and employment survey: aspirations, experiences and choices". *Equal Opportunities Commission*, 2006. Web : July 30, 2015
- Widdowson H.G. "English for Specific Purposes: Criteria for Course Design in Selinker L et al (eds)". *English for Academic and Technical Purposes*. Newbury House.1981.