

The Professional Development of English Language Teachers in Bangladeshi Universities
Under Neoliberal Reform: Perspectives of Teachers and Students

by

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Abstract

This research examined the professional development (PD) needs of university English teachers in Bangladesh and explored teachers' perspectives on how the context in which they work might inform the professional development approaches provided for them. Additionally, the research examined students' perspectives on English language teaching in Bangladesh. Given the significance of the English language, professional development for teachers is necessary to enhance the effectiveness of English language teaching (ELT) in Bangladesh (Cross et al., 2022; Rahman et al., 2018b). Therefore, this research primarily investigated the importance and effectiveness of English language teaching, the concept of PD in relation to the Bangladeshi context, public and private university training and PD opportunities, and the PD approaches that can contribute to Bangladeshi ELT. Theoretically, this research adopted a neoliberal teacher-education perspective (Levinsson et al., 2020) and is also informed by academic capitalism (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2010).

This qualitative research study employed semi-structured one-on-one interviews with 19 English language teachers and five focus-group interviews (groups of three) with 15 students from five universities in Bangladesh. Qualitative thematic analysis was used to reveal findings from the data sets collected (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Saldaña, 2011). The study concluded that ESL teachers are highly committed to professional growth but lack access to structured, context-specific PD. Viewing current PD offerings as sporadic, generic, and misaligned with practical classroom challenges, these teachers advocated for practice-based, peer-supported, and sustained approaches, including reflective teaching journals, mentoring, and communities of practice. Findings also indicate that teachers actively engage in informal learning through self-study, peer collaboration, and digital platforms amid the absence of formal programs.

Students expressed concern over outdated, lecture-centric instruction, emphasizing the need for more communicative, student-centered approaches. Additionally, disparities between public and private universities shaped unequal access to quality instruction and PD. Participants highlighted that effective PD must be responsive to the socio-cultural and pedagogical realities of Bangladeshi higher education, underscoring the need for inclusive, locally grounded PD frameworks that amplify teacher voice and bridge institutional gaps, offering a critical lens on how PD can be reimagined in low-resource, postcolonial settings.

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated with deepest love and gratitude to my beloved parents, Sultana Rezia, my mother, and Md. Abdus Samad, my father. Their unwavering belief in the value of education, lifelong encouragement, and the principles they instilled in me laid the foundation for this accomplishment and profoundly shaped my identity and purpose. Their guidance, aspirations, and sacrifices inspired me to pursue this dream and sustain this academic journey.

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Although they are no longer here to witness the completion of this journey, their presence remains a constant source of strength.

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List of Acronyms

CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
EIA	English in Action
ELT	English Language Teaching
ELTIP	English Language Teaching Improvement Project
EMI	English as a Medium of Instruction
ESL	English as a Second Language
GTM	Grammar Translation Method
HEAT	Higher Education Acceleration and Transformation
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HEQEP	Higher Education Quality Enhancement Project
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
IQACs	Institutional Quality Assurance Cells
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
PD	Professional Development
TELSHEB	Transforming English Language Skills in Higher Education
TESL	Teaching English as a Second Language
TOEFL	Test of English as a Foreign Language
TPD	Teacher Professional Development
UGC	University Grants Commission of Bangladesh

Chapter 1: Introduction and Overview

This research investigates the professional development (PD) needs of university-level English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers in Bangladesh, aiming to understand how specific contexts and challenges shape these needs. Against a backdrop of Bangladesh's unique educational landscape—where English proficiency is essential for academic and professional advancement—the study explores teachers' perspectives on PD, the role of institutions in supporting ongoing development, and the broader impact of neoliberal policies on the teaching profession. Key objectives include identifying gaps in existing PD opportunities, evaluating institutional contributions to teacher growth, and proposing contextually relevant PD approaches to enhance ESL teaching quality. By drawing from qualitative data, this research not only highlights the challenges ESL educators face but also offers insights into creating sustainable, tailored PD approaches that can uplift both teaching standards and educational outcomes in Bangladesh's evolving higher-education sector.

Background of the Problem

In the evolving global landscape of education, the role of qualified educators, especially in ESL, has become increasingly crucial. This need for effective English teachers is particularly relevant in Bangladesh, where neoliberal policies have transformed the educational field, emphasizing employability and economic competitiveness (Hamid & Al Amin, 2022; Hamid & Sultana, 2024; Rahman et al., 2019a). However, these reforms have created both opportunities and challenges for educators and institutions striving to meet new demands. The education system in Bangladesh, especially at the higher-education level, faces unique challenges due to a scarcity of well-trained ESL teachers, limited access to resources, and a lack of structured PD pathways (Kader & Salam, 2019). This background section explores the historical and

contemporary issues that impact the effectiveness of initial teacher education (ITE) and teacher professional development (TPD) in Bangladesh, particularly within the context of ESL.

Initial Teacher Education in Bangladesh: Gaps and Limitations

Initial teacher education (ITE) is intended to lay the foundation for effective teaching by providing pre-service teachers with essential pedagogical knowledge and competencies for entering the profession. However, in Bangladesh, ITE for ESL educators is underdeveloped and often non-mandatory. As highlighted by Das (2021), many college-level teachers enter the profession without formal pedagogical training, leading to gaps in their knowledge of classroom management, lesson planning, and technology integration skills. This shortfall is exacerbated in ESL classrooms, where specialized training in language-acquisition techniques is critical for implementing communicative language teaching (CLT) strategies effectively. The absence of mandatory pre-service training in Bangladesh's higher-education institutions has led to inconsistencies in teaching quality, with many educators lacking the knowledge and skills to support diverse classrooms and innovative teaching methods (Das, 2021).

In addition, there is a significant disparity in access to ITE resources between rural and urban areas. Teachers in rural regions, where educational needs are often greater, frequently lack access to advanced training programs, further widening the quality gap between urban and rural education systems. Research has underscored the importance of comprehensive pre-service teacher education that covers inclusive pedagogies and strategies for creating supportive learning environments (Symeonidou, 2017). ITE in Bangladesh includes four core components: education studies, subject-specific teaching studies, elective courses, and supervised teaching practice (Rahman, 2020). The curriculum emphasizes pedagogical skills, information and communication technology integration, inclusive education, and research competency. Guiding principles

include promoting professional growth, ethical responsibility, social inclusiveness, and responsiveness to national educational needs (Rahman, 2022). Teacher education is delivered through government colleges, universities, and distance-learning institutions under national competency standards.

Teacher Professional Development Challenges

For in-service educators, teacher professional development (TPD) is intended to be a career-long process of acquiring new knowledge and skills to adapt to evolving educational demands. In Bangladesh, however, TPD initiatives are sporadic and insufficiently funded, with limited access to continuous professional learning opportunities. TPD in ESL is critical due to the changing field of language teaching, influenced by global communication needs and evolving pedagogies. Scholars argue that a collaborative and ongoing approach to professional learning is necessary to foster adaptive teaching practices and professional identity among educators (Pi et al., 2024; Yu & Chao, 2022; Zhang et al., 2024). However, most TPD programs in Bangladesh are short-term and focus primarily on theoretical knowledge rather than practical classroom application, which limits their impact on teaching quality.

Compounding this issue is the inadequacy of coordinated support for ESL teachers who require training in CLT and digital literacy to stay relevant in a globalized educational environment. Without sustained TPD, ESL educators struggle to implement learner-centered approaches and digital tools effectively, leaving them unprepared to meet modern classroom demands. Furthermore, financial constraints within institutions limit the availability of TPD opportunities, leading many teachers to rely on informal peer learning, which may not provide the depth or consistency needed for substantial professional growth. To address the lack of sustained TPD and institutional financial constraints, the government and higher-education

institutions should invest in long-term, context-specific PD frameworks. These should include structured, practice-oriented programs, institutional funding for teacher training, and collaborative peer-learning models that move beyond informal interactions to ensure consistency and depth in teacher growth.

Influence of Neoliberal Policies on Higher Education and English Language Teaching

Neoliberal economic policies have significantly influenced higher education in Bangladesh, driving a shift towards market-driven educational priorities. This transformation has emphasized the importance of English to enhance employability, positioning English proficiency as an asset in the global economy (Hamid & Al Amin, 2022; Hamid & Sultana, 2024; Rahman et al., 2019a). Consequently, English language teaching (ELT) has shifted from a critical pedagogical practice to a commodified skill set aimed at improving students' job prospects. In public and private universities alike, market-driven ELT approaches prioritize skill-based instruction over critical thinking and language appreciation, often at the expense of holistic educational development. These policies have contributed to a focus on communicative competence and standardized testing, which, while valuable, overlook the importance of deep cultural understanding and critical language skills essential for comprehensive language mastery.

The privatization of higher education, spurred by the neoliberal agenda, has led to a rapid expansion of private universities, each vying to attract students with promises of English as a medium of instruction (EMI) and job-oriented programs. However, this expansion has not been accompanied by proportional investments in teaching quality or infrastructure, creating disparities in educational resources and teacher training opportunities. Public institutions, constrained by limited budgets, struggle to keep up with the demands of EMI, leading to inadequate support for both students and faculty members. This disparity between private and

public institutions has intensified social divides, as students from affluent backgrounds who attend private universities often have better access to high-quality ESL resources and instruction, while those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds lag due to limited resources and insufficiently trained educators (Hamid & Sultana, 2024).

Implications for Teacher Preparedness and Educational Outcomes

The lack of effective ITE and TPD frameworks for ESL teachers in Bangladesh has direct implications for student outcomes and teacher retention. Teachers without structured PD opportunities are less likely to stay updated with innovative teaching practices and may face challenges in managing diverse classrooms or engaging students in communicative language activities (Kabir, 2020). As a result, students miss out on quality learning experiences, reducing their overall academic performance and preparedness for a globalized workforce (Kabir & Chowdhury, 2021). Inadequate teacher training and support can also lead to high teacher turnover rates, as educators may feel unprepared or unsupported in their professional roles.

Moreover, outdated assessment practices further hinder the effectiveness of ESL education, with exams often focusing on rote memorization rather than real-life language application. This assessment approach fails to measure communicative competence, leaving students ill-equipped to navigate real-world scenarios that require fluent English use (Kader & Salam, 2019). Thus, the current ESL education framework not only impacts teachers' ability to deliver high-quality instruction but also limits students' potential for future success in an increasingly globalized world. Addressing these challenges requires a re-evaluation of both ITE and TPD frameworks in Bangladesh. Similar outdated, exam-focused ESL assessment practices continue to reinforce class divisions in other postcolonial and low- to middle-income countries such as India, Pakistan, Nigeria, and Kenya. In these settings, rote-based exams favor students

from wealthy, urban backgrounds with access to quality English education, while marginalizing those from under-resourced schools. These practices perpetuate systemic socio-economic inequalities and restrict equitable access to communicative skills and opportunities for mobility (Assaad et al., 2019; Christopher, 2008; Joshi et al., 2024; Mehmood et al., 2024; Zahid, 2025).

Statement of the Problem

The context for and initial interest in this research can be traced to my experience as an English language teacher. The Bangladeshi university where I worked offers compulsory English language courses and regular subject-related courses for undergraduate and graduate students. I was particularly concerned with poor English language performance among university students. It is evident that a strong command of the English language is paramount for advancing Bangladeshi individuals to secure better job opportunities within Bangladesh and to pursue higher education and immigration abroad (Ali & Hamid, 2022; Roshid & Chowdhury, 2013). Nevertheless, many Bangladeshi graduates appear to struggle with effective communication skills in English (Ali et al., 2023; Donohue et al., 2012; Haider & Chowdhury, 2012).

Considering these challenges, it is instructive to explore how other countries have responded to similar concerns through strategic educational policies. Several countries—including Singapore, Brunei, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Vietnam, and Finland—offer strong and flexible models of English language education policies that Bangladesh could adopt to enhance English instruction, curriculum reform, teacher training, assessment, and system coordination. For instance, Singapore promotes English as an ethnically neutral, socio-economically empowering language through its bilingual policy, communicative curriculum, and mandatory teacher development (Jain & Wee, 2019). In a similar vein, Vietnam institutionalizes English from Grade 1 via its MTB-MLE framework, linking it to equity and global mobility,

supported by structured teacher certification and mentoring (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2019). Likewise, Malaysia's CEFR-aligned Roadmap (2015–2025) integrates curriculum, assessment, and teacher training, addressing gaps in communicative competence and employability (Rahman et al., 2022). Meanwhile, Finland's research-driven teacher education and early-start curriculum produce strong results despite English being a foreign language (Sahlberg, 2015). Brunei, too, has raised teacher qualification standards to strengthen ELT outcomes (Goode, 2020). Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 has driven ELT reforms by introducing English earlier, shifting to communicative curricula, and emphasizing continuous TPD, technology integration, and improved pedagogy (Ndiaye et al., 2024). These efforts aim to boost English proficiency for economic diversification. Finally, the UAE's education reforms—especially the 2017 Emirates School Model mandating English-medium instruction and the TELS UAE teacher licensing system—illustrate a top-down approach to improving English proficiency and teacher quality (Taylor & Kay, 2019).

Despite the availability of such models for emulation, Bangladesh faces complex internal challenges that hinder the effectiveness of English language education. Several studies conclude that students' lack of motivation to study English and the challenges students encounter when studying through the medium of English are reasons for their difficulties with English (Alavinia & Sehat, 2012; Çankaya, 2017; Donohue et al., 2012; Pun & Thomas, 2020; Sultana, 2014). The challenges in English language education are not limited to students alone but are also faced by university English language teachers in Bangladesh. A significant portion of the literature regarding teacher training in Bangladesh focuses on the issue of insufficient pre-service and in-service training as a major obstacle to achieving high-quality education in Bangladesh (Ahmed, 2021; Ahsan et al., 2011; Das, 2021; Donohue et al., 2012; Raqib, 2019). According to Das

(2021), “It is proved here that lack of training is a huge barrier to ensuring quality education in Bangladesh” (p. 295).

The lack of adequate pre-service and in-service training opportunities for teachers teaching the English language in Bangladesh poses a considerable challenge to their professional growth (Ahmed, 2021; Ahsan et al., 2011; Das, 2021; Donohue et al., 2012; Khan et al., 2010). Teachers must receive adequate training and education to ensure they have the necessary skills and knowledge to excel in their teaching profession and advance their careers. Another significant challenge is that although English language teachers have used communicative approaches in ELT for over three decades, this application by classroom teachers has often been met with challenges (Shrestha, 2013). The most widely used method in ELT for developing students’ communicative competence in South Asian countries is CLT (Sultana et al., 2022).

Additionally, Bangladeshi English language teachers frequently encounter a lack of adequate support from their universities to improve the quality of their teaching (Ahmed, 2021; Ahsan et al., 2011; Barua & Uddin, 2021; Das, 2021; Donohue et al., 2012). It is crucial for universities to invest in comprehensive training programs to support their teachers’ ongoing learning and development. Even as a former English language teacher at my Bangladeshi university, I recognized that my students were not the only ones facing challenges in learning English. My colleagues also encountered a variety of difficulties when it came to teaching the language, such as inadequate support from their respective universities in terms of training and opportunities for PD. The focus of my study, therefore, will be on improving TPD for ESL teachers in Bangladesh.

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research is to examine university ESL teachers' needs for PD, how they define PD, what PD initiatives they participate in, and the role of public and private universities in developing PD approaches for ESL teachers. In addition, this research study delves into the impact of the neoliberal transformation on TPD in Bangladesh's higher-education sector. With the rising demand for English proficiency as a key driver of socio-economic mobility, this research explores how neoliberal dynamics, such as privatization and market-driven reforms, influence the availability, structure, and effectiveness of PD initiatives for ESL teachers in both public and private universities in Bangladesh. The study also seeks to document teachers' perspectives on PD opportunities, examine the structural and economic constraints that limit effective teacher training, and identify strategies for developing sustainable and inclusive PD approaches that address the distinct challenges Bangladeshi ESL teachers face. To enrich the depth and scope of this research, the researcher generated qualitative data through interviews with both teacher and student participants from public and private universities in Bangladesh. Including student voices alongside those of teachers provides a more detailed and comprehensive understanding of the current state of ESL PD in higher education, especially from the perspective of those directly affected by institutional practices. This study aims to prepare Bangladeshi ESL teachers to improve their ELT by applying their beliefs and experiences to help them shape their PD.

Research Questions and Objectives of the Study

The following overarching question guided the research: What are Bangladeshi university ESL teachers' perspectives on their PD needs, and what are their views about the role of public

and private universities in providing PD for them? The specific research questions that guided this study were as follows:

1. What are ESL teachers' perceptions about PD and training in universities in Bangladesh?
2. What are teachers' perspectives on the PD needs of university ESL teachers in Bangladesh?
3. What are students' perspectives on ELT in universities in Bangladesh?
4. What do ESL teachers think about how their context and beliefs can be used to shape their PD programs?
5. Which PD initiatives are ESL teachers engaged in within Bangladeshi universities?
6. What new or alternative PD approaches or initiatives can be proposed for university English language teachers in Bangladesh?

In recent years, there has been a growing awareness of the significance of qualified teachers in Asian countries who need ongoing professional development (Choi & Lee, 2007; Em et al., 2021; Richards & Farrell, 2005; Spilt et al., 2011; Vadivel et al., 2021). This global emphasis on teacher development has had implications for developing countries worldwide because it “allows teachers to grow professionally at different stages of their careers” (Bashiruddin, 2018, p. 181). This study will delve into the perspectives of ESL teachers, with a particular focus on their views regarding the importance of ELT in Bangladesh, as well as the availability of adequate training and PD opportunities to improve the effectiveness of education in their respective institutions. Additionally, the research investigates the existence of any PD initiatives provided for ESL teachers by their universities in Bangladesh. Further, the study will explore the challenges of improving ELT in both public and private universities in Bangladesh. It will also investigate the challenges and opportunities for necessary training and the obstacles to

PD faced by English teachers in these universities. The graduate-student researcher will accomplish this by analyzing ESL teachers' perspectives on and experiences with PD and students' perspectives on ELT in Bangladesh. The specific objectives for this study are as follows:

1. To document, analyze, and report English language teachers' and students' perceptions of teaching and learning English in both public and private universities in Bangladesh and English language teachers' understanding of PD and training within the Bangladeshi higher-education context.
2. To identify how English language teachers work on their PD in Bangladeshi universities and to find out whether they participate in any PD initiatives to facilitate their growth and enrich their ELT competencies.
3. To explore professional and institutional initiatives for PD for English language teachers in universities in Bangladesh and to discuss proposed recommendations for PD approaches for English language teachers in Bangladesh.
4. To provide an analysis of ELT and PD policies in Bangladeshi public and private universities.
5. To identify the challenges encountered by English teachers in these universities regarding PD, as well as the opportunities.

Significance of the Study

Around the globe, leaders of educational reforms are setting strong goals for student learning (Strielkowski et al., 2020). A large and growing body of literature indicates that although numerous factors contribute to achieving these goals, teachers' professional knowledge and their abilities to teach effectively are two of the most important factors influencing the

achievement of goals for student learning (Koşar & Doğan Dolapçioğlu, 2021; Marfu'ah et al., 2017; Ventista & Brown, 2023; Wilson et al., 2002). Teachers must be able to work innovatively with their students, develop and set curriculum goals, turn theoretical principles and educational research findings into effective classroom practices, and create a positive environment for active learning.

Recent studies on teacher development highlight the act of teaching as becoming continuously more complex; highly skilled teachers continue to learn, develop pedagogical repertoires, and implement wide arrays of practices that incorporate and integrate different kinds of knowledge used in various combinations flexibly and fluently (Bransford et al., 2017; Geertsema, 2021; Halal Orfali et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2025). There has been a growing interest and debate about the integral role of deliberate, continuous, high-quality professional learning and development in supporting teachers to be responsive to changing, complex, and challenging demands (Ataş & Daloğlu, 2024; Darling-Hammond et al., 2024; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Hinojosa-Pareja & García-Cano, 2020; Shah et al., 2024). Due to rapid changes in language teaching and learning, expectations for high standards, and a direct need to improve teaching, teachers need, as never before, to review and develop their skills through PD (Berhanu, 2024; Craft, 2000; Díaz-Sacco & Muñoz-Salinas, 2024; Fernandes et al., 2023; Jiang, 2017; Richards & Farrell, 2005). PD is an essential element for elevating the quality of teaching practices, which is key to enhancing students' learning. Moreover, much of the available research on PD establishes the relationship between teaching effectiveness and student achievement (Avalos, 2011; Fernandes et al., 2023).

It goes without saying that both novice and experienced teachers contribute significantly to their students' development through varied pedagogical approaches. Zhukova (2018)

conducted a longitudinal qualitative study to explore the professional concerns and developmental experiences of novice teachers during their initial two years of full-time teaching. This study, based on in-depth interviews, focus groups, and questionnaires with four novice teachers, revealed how their focus of concern shifted over time. Initially, these teachers were preoccupied with self-oriented concerns such as classroom management, discipline, and their professional adequacy. However, as they gained experience, their concerns evolved to focus more on diagnosing and understanding students' learning problems, recognizing their individual potential, and providing support to help students realize that potential. According to Zhukova (2018), novice teachers' "focus of concern shifted notably towards such aspects as diagnosing and understanding student learning problems, understanding individual student potential and helping reach it" (p. 106). This shift was attributed to the teachers' increasing professional maturity and adaptability as they navigated the complexities of real classroom environments. Zhukova (2018) emphasized that such shifts were not linear but emerged from the interplay of professional challenges, reflective practices, and environmental factors.

In the same study, both novice and experienced teachers employed problem-solving strategies to address classroom challenges and enhance student learning outcomes. However, novice teachers, particularly in contexts lacking structured induction or mentoring systems, faced significant obstacles in aligning their beliefs with effective classroom practices. This issue is compounded in countries like Bangladesh, where "lecturers are not offered training as a pre-requisite to taking up a lecturing role" (Donohue et al., 2012, p. 18). Additionally, implementing communicative approaches to teaching English requires specialized training (Khan, 2009; Quadir, 2011; Rahman et al., 2019a). Thus, while novice teachers may strive to adapt their focus towards understanding and addressing student needs, the lack of formal pre-service training

opportunities can hinder their ability to implement these strategies effectively. Understanding these contextual factors is essential for developing targeted support systems that can enhance the professional growth of novice teachers and ultimately improve educational outcomes. These findings underscore the critical need for robust teacher-development programs that address both theoretical and practical aspects of teaching, enabling educators to transition from survival-focused strategies to impactful, student-centered practices.

There is also evidence that the availability of such ELT training for novice teachers is limited in Bangladesh (Ahmed, 2021; Chowdhury & Kabir, 2014; Donohue et al., 2012). Regarding foreign language education, students and lecturers widely see English as vital to 21st-century Bangladesh, and there is a high level of enthusiasm in discussion groups for talking about how to learn and use it (Donohue et al., 2012). Despite this, researchers note that students lack the motivation to study English, and there are challenges that students encounter when studying in English (Donohue et al., 2012; Parvin & Haider, 2012). Lecturers also reported challenges due to their own English language development needs and tensions inherent in the medium of instructional policies (Donohue et al., 2012).

We cannot ignore the importance of English in Bangladesh, as it has historically been taught as a compulsory school subject (Donohue et al., 2012; Hamid & Sultana, 2024; Islam, 2021; Khan & Sultana, 2021; Rahman & Pandian, 2018). To this day, Bangladeshi students learn English as a compulsory subject from the primary-school level to the end of their pre-university schooling (Amin & Greenwood, 2022; Donohue et al., 2012; Hamid & Sultana, 2024; Islam, 2021; Kabir et al., 2020; Khan & Sultana, 2021; Rahman & Pandian, 2018). The country still faces enormous challenges in raising the nation's overall performance relating to education in English (Ahamed, 2025; Chowdhury & Kabir, 2014; Donohue et al., 2012; Islam & Stapa, 2021;

Karim et al., 2021; Rahman, 2023; Rahman & Pandian, 2018). Given the increasing importance of English as a global language, it is paramount for Bangladesh to ensure that the effectiveness of ELT is sufficient across all levels of education. Moreover, it goes without saying that the quality of education has an enormous impact on economic and social development for every country in the world (Bing, 2023; Sain et al., 2024; World Bank, 2013).

Since English is a second language in Bangladesh, to enhance the quality of teaching, it is recommended that ESL teachers focus on improving their own “language proficiency” (Haider & Chowdhury, 2012, p. 13) and “knowledge of language teaching” (Rahman & Pandian, 2018, p. 43). But it is important to consider that language proficiency is not the only factor contributing to Bangladeshi English teachers’ effectiveness. To provide high-quality education, teachers also need regular training and PD to strengthen their skills in ELT classroom management, assessment, and methodology (Alam et al., 2015; Haider & Chowdhury, 2012; Rahman et al., 2018b). These opportunities can help them remain current with the latest teaching approaches and methods and enable them to adapt their teaching styles to the evolving needs of their students (Haider & Chowdhury, 2012). Moreover, TPD and training programs are crucial for keeping teachers informed of the latest theory and practices related to learning, development, and performance in diverse fields, including ELT (Fernandes et al., 2023; Lim et al., 2025; Richards & Farrell, 2005; Yusop et al., 2025). This need for opportunities for PD is reinforced by Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (2011), who reported that “new course mandates, curriculum guidelines, tests, or texts cannot produce greater student learning and understanding without investments in opportunities that give teachers access to knowledge about the nature of learning, development, and performance in different domains” (p. 83). In addition, teachers need first-hand opportunities to integrate theory with classroom practice.

Defining Professional Development

Researchers have identified professional development (PD) as comprising different approaches and strategies that facilitate an ongoing professional learning process (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Fernandes et al., 2023; Richards & Farrell, 2005; Solomon et al., 2023). PD is best understood as a sustained, systematic, and contextually grounded process that integrates formal and informal learning to enhance educators' professional knowledge for curriculum, disciplinary expertise, instructional practices, and professional identity (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Fernandes et al., 2023; Lafferty et al., 2024). It involves continuous engagement in reflective inquiry, collaborative learning, and the adoption of innovative teaching methods aligned with evolving educational demands (Berhanu, 2024; Fabriz et al., 2020).

Rather than being limited to discrete training events, PD reflects a longitudinal developmental continuum that begins with initial teacher education and extends through in-service practice, embracing diverse modalities such as mentoring, coaching, research, peer collaboration, and experiential learning (Stevenson et al., 2016). In the context of language teaching, Richards and Farrell (2005) examined “eleven different procedures that can be used to facilitate professional development in language teaching: workshops, self-monitoring, teacher support groups, journal writing, peer observation, teaching portfolios, analysis of critical incidents, case analysis, peer coaching, team teaching, and action research” (p. v).

When exploring the nuances between teacher training and teacher development, it is apparent that they possess distinct characteristics (Curtis, 2018; Richards & Farrell, 2005). According to Richards and Farrell (2005), teacher education encompasses two primary goals: “training and development” (p. 3). Training entails activities that directly apply to a teacher's current responsibilities and aim to achieve short-term and immediate objectives. Similarly, Curtis

(2018) argued that in professional settings, “training” and “development” are often used interchangeably, but a significant distinction exists between training and development concerning time and timing. Training is typically a short-term process that occurs early on in a professional’s career, whereas development is a continuous and lifelong process of learning and growth (Curtis, 2018, p. 1). Essentially, training focuses on acquiring specific skills and knowledge needed for a particular job or task, while development is a broader process that encompasses personal and professional growth and can lead to career advancement.

In Freeman’s (2024) reconceptualization, TPD is not merely an intervention to improve classroom outcomes but a dynamic, situated process of “teacher sensemaking” (p. 90). Rather than viewing teachers as passive recipients of externally mandated change, PD is understood as “an organization of teacher learning” (p. 13) where teachers are active agents constructing meaning from professional experiences within their own socio-cultural and institutional contexts.

Pre-service teacher education and in-service TPD programs must focus on providing a seamless continuum of learning that provides a holistic and comprehensive approach to teacher education. The continuum of learning should begin with pre-service education, which serves as a foundation for future learning and practice (Burke et al., 2025; Casanova-Fernández et al., 2022; Hills & Sessoms-Penny, 2021; Simon & Nissim, 2023). These scholars go on to argue that this phase should emphasize a deep understanding of content areas, pedagogy, and best practices for teaching, including strategies for creating effective learning environments and promoting inclusion and diversity in education. It should also incorporate practical classroom experiences, such as observations, co-teaching, and supervised teaching.

PD for teachers encompasses their ongoing education, including how they learn and apply their knowledge to enhance student learning (Avalos, 2011; Berhanu, 2024; Díaz-Sacco &

Muñoz-Salinas, 2024; Ruiz-Madrid & Fortanet-Gómez, 2022; Sims & Fletcher-Wood, 2020).

Teachers can learn through various avenues, such as attending different programs reflecting on their teaching within their school or observing and reflecting on their colleagues' teaching when collaborative or team-teaching approaches are used. Professional learning may arise from planned reflection meetings or informally through conversations with colleagues before or after class. Therefore, research suggests that PD can occur through various formal and informal methods.

Historical and Cultural Context of the Problem

This study is set in Bangladesh and explores the topic of PD for university ESL teachers. This section provides a broad overview of the research setting and the historical context of Bangladesh, which in turn establishes the conditions and significance of my research on ESL TPD in university education in Bangladesh. It explains the status of English globally and then offers a brief historical background of higher education in Bangladesh, the higher-education system, and the historical background of teacher education. This discussion of context extends from a worldwide lens to a more narrowly focused look at the situation in Bangladesh. Most recently, the abrupt political transition in August 2024—marked by the resignation of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and the appointment of Nobel laureate Dr. Muhammad Yunus as interim leader—has intensified instability in the higher-education sector, stalled reforms, and exacerbated the challenges of ESL TPD (Ahmed et al., 2024; Akhter, 2025; Paul, 2024).

English Language Teaching and Teacher Education in the Global Context

English is globally positioned as a dominant language and commodified form of human capital, linked to economic advancement, social status, and transnational mobility across individual, institutional, national, and global levels (Ennsner-Kananen et al., 2017; Roshid &

Sultana, 2023; Sharma & Phyak, 2017; Shin, 2015; Simpson, 2023; Sung-Yul Park & Lo, 2012). As a result, English language education has grown substantially, shaped by evolving educational standards and trends, as well as organizational responses to shifting curricula, national assessments, and student needs (Murray, 2018; Richards & Farrell, 2005; Sang, 2023; Sukjairungwattana et al., 2025; Vaishnav, 2024). The field of English language teacher education faces many complex challenges in preparing English language teachers to work in the “expanded, diverse, and dynamic neoliberal contexts” (Nguyen, 2019, p. 2).

Since the English education field is experiencing rapid growth, it is in constant flux under the influence of neoliberalism. This rapid expansion has made English education contexts and the population of English language learners “much more complex, disparate, and diverse than ever before” (Nguyen, 2019, p. 2). It should be mentioned that the influence of neoliberalism has extended beyond the economic sector and has impacted the English education industry in Bangladesh as well (Haider et al., 2025; Islam et al., 2022; Rahman & Hu, 2025). In the 1990s, the higher-education sector in Bangladesh experienced a shift towards neoliberalism, initiated by democratic governments that introduced market-driven economic policies (Ali & Hamid, 2022; Kabir, 2013). Consequently, the goals of ELT have shifted to responding to job-market demands, aligning with market logic (Ali & Hamid, 2022; Ali et al., 2023). These changes have resulted in the establishment of new approaches for public universities, as well as a significant growth of private universities, which have effectively promoted the marketization of higher education in Bangladesh (Ali & Hamid, 2022; Ali et al., 2023; Kabir, 2013).

A recent study by Murray (2018) summarizes various personal and contextual diversities in English education today. Many nations teach English as a subject at different schooling levels to develop human capital, strengthen economic growth, and increase global mobility (Flores,

2013; Murray, 2018; Phuong & Vo, 2024). It has been reported that in many countries, students learn English in primary schools and continue studying it all the way through to postgraduate studies with mixed outcomes (Murray, 2018; Shrestha, 2013).

Although ELT in public-sector education continues to be widely used worldwide, there has been an increase in diverse alternative educational delivery methods. The for-profit ELT sector is thriving in various countries such as China, Korea, and Brazil, and there is a growing trend towards new multimodal forms of instruction, including online teaching, which are creating new opportunities for English language learning (Freeman, 2018). Families and individuals are interested in being proficient in English, and they are investing more and more in developing English proficiency as human capital through additional English classes (Gkonou & Miller, 2019).

Globalization has caused a rise in the need for English language proficiency worldwide, especially in countries where English is not the native language (Sawalmeh & Dey, 2023). Consequently, there is an increased demand for qualified English teachers who can effectively teach ESL to non-native speakers. As a result, the English language teaching and learning sector now has a large culturally and linguistically diverse workforce with different knowledge, skills, and experiences than in the past (Freeman, 2018). Within this broader globalized and neoliberal context of ELT and teacher development, recent political upheaval in Bangladesh has further disrupted efforts to professionalize ESL teaching and implement systemic educational reform.

Bangladesh experienced a major political upheaval in August 2024 when Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was forced to resign amid widespread student protests, and Nobel laureate Dr. Muhammad Yunus took over leadership as head of an interim caretaker government (Ahmed et al., 2024; Paul, 2024). This change caused ongoing disruptions in the higher-education sector,

including extended campus closures, curriculum reversals, and administrative chaos (Ahmed et al., 2024; Akhter, 2025).

The removal of Sheikh Hasina and the appointment of Yunus stalled nationwide educational reforms, including the halted rollout of a new competency-based curriculum introduced in 2022–2023 (Ahmed et al., 2024; Akhter, 2025). University governance was destabilized as many vice-chancellors and senior officials were forced to resign, creating urgent leadership vacancies and disruptions in institutional oversight (Akhter, 2025). Public funding constraints worsened as education spending continued to decline under the interim regime, limiting investments in teacher training and infrastructure (Akhter, 2025).

Within the context of ESL and PD for university-level English teachers, this political turbulence worsened existing gaps in structured, context-aware training. Policy changes overturned training programs linked to the now-suspended curriculum (Ahmed et al., 2024). Additionally, long-standing deficiencies in communicative language teaching skills, teacher preparedness, and instructional quality remained unaddressed (M. Ahmed, 2025; Shoaon et al., 2024). However, the interim period presents a potential opportunity for systemic reform: as Ahmed et al. (2024) suggest, investing in teacher professionalization—through transparent governance, fair pay, and improved training—is crucial for long-term improvements in ESL teaching quality.

In summary, the removal of Hasina and the transitional leadership of Yunus disrupted higher-education continuity and paused curriculum reforms, further weakening teacher development initiatives. The opportunity exists for renewed policy focus on strengthening ESL teacher preparation and institutional support, but its realization depends on follow-through by the interim and future governing bodies.

Considering such global and national developments, the training of English teachers has emerged as a crucial component of educational reform under globalization. It involves preparing teachers to teach English as a global language while addressing its cultural, social, and linguistic aspects. In order to be successful, English teacher training and PD must value teachers' knowledge, leverage modern teaching methodologies to enrich language learning, tailor the training of English teachers to the local context, and involve local experts and teachers in classroom research (Kumaravadivelu, 2013; Sawalmeh & Dey, 2023).

The Status of English in Bangladesh

In Bangladesh, Bangla is the national language (Ara, 2020; Karim et al., 2021; Rahman et al., 2010; Shahed & Rahman, 2022). It is used as the functional language in all the domains of society, including government, education, law, administration, everyday communication, the media, and entertainment (Ara, 2020; Hamid & Al Amin, 2022; Imam, 2005). It is the medium of instruction in the primary, secondary, and higher secondary education of the Bangla-medium schools (Rahman et al., 2019b). However, the dominance of English in Bangladesh's education system is deeply rooted in British colonial rule, which institutionalized English as the medium of instruction and a symbol of elite status. This legacy continues to shape language policy, curriculum, and sociolinguistic hierarchies in both public and private education sectors (Ali & Hamid, 2021; Ali et al., 2023; Hamid & Al Amin, 2022; Khan & Sultana, 2021). In recent years, English has become the most dominant international language of communication because of massive globalization (Ara, 2020; Li, 2025; Roshid & Sultana, 2023; Zeng & Yang, 2024; Zeng et al., 2023). As a small country politically and economically impacted by global technology and trade, Bangladesh is largely influenced by English. Currently, English has become the second most important language in Bangladesh, often considered even more important than the native

Bangla language (Ara, 2020). It has developed a superior place in the education sector, as it is seen as a mode of growth at both personal and national levels (Ara, 2020; Erling et al., 2012). For these reasons, I use the term English as a Second Language (ESL) in this thesis, as it aligns with its widespread use in Bangladeshi scholarship. English is omnipresent in every domain of Bangladeshi life. Consequently, universities, specifically private ones, have started emphasizing English as part of the curriculum (Hamid & Al Amin, 2022; Hamid & Sultana, 2024; Sultana, 2014). These universities maintain strict rules for using English as a medium of instruction. In addition, they offer general English courses for weaker students. However, this initiative is perhaps not very rewarding for students from different societal backgrounds, and it is observed that most students take a long time to learn within the university's English-only environment (Hamid & Sultana, 2024; Islam & Stapa, 2021; Karim et al., 2021; Sultana, 2014, 2018). Most students struggle to pass all the foundational English courses, and they also do not perform well in the courses in which all four skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) are emphasized (Hamid & Sultana, 2024; Islam & Stapa, 2021; Karim et al., 2021; Rahman et al., 2010).

Learners in Bangladesh study English for both professional and academic success. The emphasis on teaching English in Bangladesh is attributed to the ever-rising global demand for skilled English speakers (Islam & Stapa, 2021; Murtaza, 2016; Sultana, 2018; Younus, 2023). Until students enroll in university, they study English during their school and college lives. The motivation of Bangladeshi English learners has become instrumental in their pursuit of higher education, access to better employment, and participation in the global job market (Ali et al., 2023; Ali & Hamid, 2021; Hamid & Sultana, 2024; Rahman, 2005; Roshid & Sultana, 2023). Their primary goal is to achieve practical advantages, and they have limited desire to interact with native speakers in real life. Therefore, Hamid (2015) has explained that in a neoliberal

world where the commodification and commercialization of English and education have been normalized, the definition of the linguistic market helps to build a perception of English as a commodity, English proficiency as a form of capital, and English teaching as a profit-driven business activity.

English Language in Education Policy and Curriculum Reform

The role of English in Bangladesh's educational landscape is both complex and pivotal, shaped by policy decisions and pedagogical shifts aimed at meeting global and local demands. As one of the largest populations worldwide engaged in learning English as a second or foreign language, Bangladesh faces unique challenges and opportunities in embedding English within its national curriculum. According to Hamid and Honan (2012), "with over 17 million children learning English, Bangladesh is one of the largest populations in the world learning English as a foreign or second language" (p. 141). Ara's (2020) analysis shows that English is utilized in Bangladesh as a second and foreign language despite being recognized as the sole language alongside Bangla. Ali (2010) places ELT in Bangladesh under the domain of ESL, while Hamid and Baldauf (2014) argue that it should be considered English as a foreign language (EFL). The Ministry of Education (2010) has since implemented a policy making English a mandatory second language in Bangladesh's educational curriculum.

The ELT policy in Bangladesh has always been surrounded by uncertainty and a lack of clear vision regarding the fundamental status of English in the country. According to Chowdhury and Kabir (2014), prior to the National Education Policy in 2010, no planned and consistent English language policy was in place. This issue is further complicated by the presence of three distinct educational systems: the secular state education system, the religious Madrasah system, and the English-medium education offered by the University of Cambridge through the British

Council (Chowdhury & Kabir, 2014). Ali and Walker (2014) note that the role of the English language differs across these systems. While Bangla and English are both used as mediums of instruction in government schools at the higher-education level, private universities primarily use English as the medium of instruction (Hamid et al., 2013).

The lack of consistency in education policies has been a long-standing issue in Bangladesh's ELT. Frequently, decisions regarding changes have been made without any apparent justification. One of the significant alterations in the ELT curriculum occurred in 1996 when there was a shift from the traditional grammar translation method (GTM) to CLT. The primary feature of CLT is that nearly all activities are carried out with the purpose of communication, and the aim is to facilitate students' use of the target language to communicate (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011). This fundamental principle of CLT promotes interaction and meaningful communication. Students are encouraged to participate in effective classroom-learning tasks that provide opportunities for them to negotiate meaning, use language in real contexts, express their ideas and opinions, and use sociolinguistic and pragmatic strategies essential for real-life interpersonal exchanges (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011; Richards & Farrell, 2005). In 1996, the CLT methodology was implemented into the secondary English curriculum in Bangladesh, replacing the traditional GTM (Ali & Hamid, 2022; Barman, 2020; Chowdhury & Kabir, 2014; Islam, 2021; NCTB, 2012). According to Chowdhury and Kabir (2014), this curriculum change was a complex process and raised questions about the adaptability of CLT in Bangladeshi classrooms. Despite this, English language teachers in Bangladesh were not adequately prepared for the change. Rahman and Pandian (2018) found that the situation remains unchanged after two decades.

To better understand the challenges associated with this transition, it is important to revisit the origins of communicative language teaching (CLT). CLT was developed in Western contexts in the early to mid-1970s. It was shaped by Council of Europe initiatives and the British notional-functional tradition and was explicitly identified as originating in Britain (Pitikornpuangpetch & Suwanarak, 2021; Qasserras, 2023). From there, it was adopted across ESL/EFL programs and later spread worldwide (Vijay & Suresh, 2023).

However, the implementation of the CLT curriculum by the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) in Bangladesh has been found to lack clarity and create complexities (Ali & Hamid, 2022; Islam, 2021; NCTB, 2012; Rahman et al., 2018a). Studies indicate that English teachers and head teachers have mixed opinions about its implementation and do not fully understand the curriculum (Barman, 2020; Das et al., 2014; Islam, 2021; Rahman et al., 2018a). Incongruence between belief and practice has also been observed (Rahman et al., 2018a). Given these findings, Chowdhury and Ha (2008) raise questions about the appropriateness of CLT and its suitability in a different Eastern context such as Bangladesh.

The efficacy of the CLT curriculum material and assessment has also been a topic of debate. Despite the emphasis placed on listening and speaking skills in the curriculum materials, these two key aspects of CLT have remained unassessed, as noted by Das et al. (2014). Additionally, Kirkwood and Rae (2011) have highlighted that secondary English textbooks in Bangladesh often prioritize grammatical and vocabulary selections rather than communicative activities as recommended by CLT.

Importance of the English Language and the Need for PD Initiatives in Bangladesh

It is well-known that language is central to the identity of the state of Bangladesh (Rahman et al., 2010; Sikder, 2024; Sultana, 2014). After independence was declared in 1971,

English was swept into the background in favor of Bengali (Rahman et al., 2010). However, since the 1980s, there has been a re-orientation towards English (Rahman et al., 2010). Hamid (2015) claimed that the 1990s saw a major improvement in English teaching, the most prominent reform being the introduction of CLT, which was jointly sponsored by the British Department for International Development and the Bangladesh Ministry of Education. In addition, with the launch of many high-profile English language projects, English teaching has received a major boost, including a £50 million “English in Action” initiative that prioritized teacher training, the use of mobile technology, and the provision of language instruction outside the formal classroom (Hamid, 2010).

The role of English in Bangladesh is mainly functional, and it is now being amplified by globalization. Currently, students study English as a mandatory subject from primary school to the end of their pre-university education (Amin & Greenwood, 2022; Hamid & Sultana, 2024; Islam, 2021; Karim et al., 2023; Khan & Sultana, 2021). During this period, to be allowed to progress to the next class level, they need to pass public examinations at the end of their secondary school (Secondary School Certificate), and upon completion of their pre-university education (Higher Secondary Certificate). In both examinations, English carries one-sixth to one-fifth of the total marks. So, students need to perform well in both examinations to ensure entry into higher studies (Kabir et al., 2020). Moreover, proficiency in English is a prerequisite for both success at university—as it is the language of instruction—and subsequent white-collar job prospects in Bangladesh. Learning a foreign language in general can provide one with a share of economic and social power in today’s highly competitive techno-economic world.

Since we are living in the age of information and communication, people are becoming more aware of the necessity of improving their language skills (Barman, 2020; Çetin et al., 2019;

Khramchenko, 2025; Stein-Smith, 2018). Upon recognizing the importance of information and communication, people need to learn the different cultures' languages—particularly English, which is established as the lingua franca across the globe (Erling et al., 2012; Kumaravadivelu, 2012). Since ELT in Bangladesh has become crucial for its economic growth, an adequate pool of trained, qualified English teachers would be necessary for achieving its economic goals.

Although many studies around the world have recognized the use of various PD approaches, very little research has been conducted on how higher-education ESL teachers in low-income countries like Bangladesh, with minimal formal training and limited resources, learn to adopt and adapt to Western pedagogical approaches and implement them within their respective contexts. It is imperative that TPD approaches be meticulously tailored to suit the context and specific requirements of EFL teachers (Johnson, 2009; Khan, 2009; Mahdi & Wadi, 2015). These approaches should be designed to cater to the diverse needs of the teachers, focusing on enhancing their EFL pedagogical competencies and knowledge base and the Bangladeshi environment in which they work.

Before proceeding to the definitions of key terms, it is useful to clarify the distinction between English as a foreign language (EFL) and English as a second language (ESL), as both terms appear throughout this dissertation. English as a foreign language (EFL) refers to learning and using English in societies where English is not the dominant or official language; instruction and exposure are primarily confined to formal classroom settings (Saud, 2019; Zhang & Kang, 2022). By contrast, English as a second language (ESL) refers to learning and using English in societies where English is an official or widely used language, allowing learners to encounter sustained input and authentic interaction in daily life (Peng, 2019; Zhang & Kang, 2022). Put succinctly, ESL involves, in Takkaç-Tulgar's (2018) words, "learning the language in its natural

and authentic context” (p. 161), whereas EFL describes learning in contexts with limited everyday exposure to English. In practice, the literature converges on two distinctions: (a) of sociolinguistic environment, where English is embedded across public life in ESL settings but not in EFL ones; and (b) of input and interaction, where ESL learners receive richer ambient input, while EFL learners rely primarily on classroom instruction (Saud, 2019; Zhang & Kang, 2022). This distinction provides an essential conceptual anchor for situating English language teaching in Bangladesh within global debates about its categorization.

Definition of Terms

Communicative Language Teaching: Communicative language teaching (CLT) is an approach that prioritizes communicative competence through meaningful interaction and real-world language use. Emerging in the 1970s and 1980s as a shift from grammar-based methods, CLT integrates fluency, accuracy, and language skills through interactive activities like role-playing and simulations. It fosters spontaneous communication, with teachers as facilitators rather than instructors. While widely adopted, traditional assessments often limit its full implementation. Nonetheless, CLT has transformed language teaching by emphasizing learner-centered, functional communication over rote memorization (Byram & Hu, 2013; Harmer, 2015; Richards & Schmidt, 2010).

Didactic Teaching Methods: In academic terms, didactic teaching methods refer to structured and teacher-centered approaches that prioritize systematic instruction, explicit explanation, and guided practice. These methods emphasize direct transmission of knowledge from the instructor to the learner, often using lectures, demonstrations, and clearly defined learning objectives. The focus is on content mastery, logical sequencing of information, and formal assessment to ensure comprehension (Byram & Hu, 2013).

Direct Method: The direct method is an approach to foreign- or second-language teaching that emerged in the late 19th century as a reaction against the grammar translation method (GTM). It emphasizes exclusive use of the target language in the classroom and rejects translation as a teaching tool. Instead, meanings are conveyed directly through actions, objects, gestures, and situational contexts. The direct method prioritizes speech before literacy, inductive grammar learning, and real-life contexts. Students develop oral proficiency first, infer grammar rules through exposure, and engage in dialogues for natural communication (Harmer, 2015; Richards & Schmidt, 2010).

English as a Second Language: English as a second language (ESL) refers to the process of learning and using English in an environment where it is necessary for daily communication, education, business, or governance, typically in a country where English holds significant social or institutional importance. Unlike English as a Foreign Language (EFL), which is learned in contexts with limited exposure to English outside the classroom, ESL involves immersive or practical language acquisition, such as by immigrants in English-speaking countries or individuals in multilingual nations where English serves as a key medium of interaction (Richards & Schmidt, 2010).

English Language Teaching: English language teaching (ELT) refers to the practice and methodology of instructing English to non-native speakers, encompassing both the ESL and EFL contexts. Predominantly used in British academia, ELT aligns closely with the North American term Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) and integrates pedagogical principles, linguistic theory, and language acquisition strategies to enhance learners' proficiency (Richards & Schmidt, 2010).

Grammar Translation Method: The grammar translation method (GTM) is a traditional approach to language teaching that emphasizes explicit instruction of grammatical rules in the learner's first language (L1) and the translation of sentences between the target language (L2) and L1. This method prioritizes written language and accuracy, often focusing on sentence-level structures while largely neglecting spoken communication (Harmer, 2015).

Initial Teacher Education: Initial teacher education (ITE), also referred to as pre-service teacher education, is a formal, structured program aimed at preparing prospective teachers through an integrated approach that combines theoretical foundations, pedagogical training, and practical teaching experience (Atar & Bağcı, 2019; Fernandes et al., 2023). ITE plays a vital role in early teacher development by equipping novice educators with core pedagogical competencies, fostering reflective practice, and providing supervised practicum to bridge theory and classroom application (Hills & Sessoms-Penny, 2021; Pillay & Naicker, 2024).

Professional Development Approaches: Professional development approaches refer to structured and intentional strategies designed to enhance teachers' instructional skills, subject knowledge, and professional identity through both individual and collaborative learning experiences. These approaches range from traditional training models to more dynamic, context-responsive, and reflective practices such as action research, peer coaching, and professional learning communities. Effective PD is typically content-focused, sustained, job-embedded, collaborative, and aligned with institutional goals and educational reforms (Borko et al., 2010; Pak et al., 2020; Richards & Farrell, 2005).

Task-Based Learning: Task-based learning (TBL), or task-based language teaching (TBLT), is a language-instruction approach that prioritizes meaningful tasks over explicit grammar teaching. Rooted in CLT, it emphasizes authentic communication, negotiation of

meaning, and contextualized language use. TBL follows a structured cycle: pre-task (preparation), task performance (interaction), and post-task (language analysis). By focusing on task completion, TBL promotes natural language acquisition through real-world communication and problem-solving (Harmer, 2015; Richards & Schmidt, 2010).

Teacher Professional Development and Continuing Professional Development: Teacher professional development (TPD) and continuing professional development (CPD) are ongoing processes through which educators enhance their pedagogical competencies, subject expertise, and adaptability to educational changes. They involve diverse learning activities—such as workshops, mentoring, and training in innovative methodologies—to support professional growth and improve teaching effectiveness and student outcomes (Richards & Farrell, 2005; Sadeghi & Richards, 2021; Watson & Michael, 2016).

Structure of the Dissertation

This dissertation is organized into seven chapters, each contributing to a comprehensive examination of ESL TPD in Bangladeshi higher education within a neoliberal framework. Chapter 1 introduces the study, outlining its purpose, research questions, and significance. It discusses the background of ESL teaching and PD in Bangladesh, establishing a conceptual focus on neoliberal influences on education and teacher training. Chapter 2 sets the contextual foundation by examining the structure of higher education in Bangladesh. It addresses the historical evolution of the sector, institutional diversity, and governance. The chapter also discusses the prominence of EMI, the implications of linguistic and social divides, and the critical need for structured TPD initiatives. Chapter 3 presents a comprehensive review of relevant literature. It details the theoretical and conceptual frameworks—particularly

neoliberalism and academic capitalism—and critically engages with global and local perspectives on ESL teaching, PD approaches, and challenges in the Bangladeshi context.

Chapter 4 outlines the qualitative research design and methodology. It includes the study's epistemological orientation, participant recruitment, data collection methods (semi-structured interviews and focus groups), data analysis procedures, and strategies to ensure research validity and ethical integrity. Chapter 5 presents findings from interviews with ESL teachers. It identifies key themes related to teachers' perceptions of ELT, their PD needs, institutional challenges, and the influence of contextual factors on professional learning experiences. Chapter 6 offers insights from student focus-group interviews. It highlights students' views on the effectiveness of ESL instruction, the systemic shortcomings in teacher preparedness, and their experiences within public and private university environments. Chapter 7 concludes the dissertation by synthesizing key findings, articulating contributions to the field, and reflecting on implications for policy, practice, and future research. It also discusses limitations of the study and proposes contextually grounded recommendations for improving ESL teacher PD in Bangladesh.

Conclusion

This introductory chapter establishes a comprehensive foundation for understanding the complex needs and challenges associated with the PD of university ESL teachers in Bangladesh by outlining the rationale, objectives, and research questions guiding this qualitative study. By contextualizing the study within Bangladesh's distinct sociopolitical and educational landscape—where English is vital for academic and economic progress—the chapter emphasizes the essential role that PD plays in enhancing the quality of English language instruction. This research not only aimed to capture ESL teachers' perceptions of PD but also sought to garner

their perspectives about the effects of institutional practices and neoliberal policies on the availability and effectiveness of the PD initiatives that they have experienced at their institutions. The perceptions of students regarding teaching and learning in English language courses were also gathered. These insights help illuminate the pathways to developing tailored PD frameworks that align with the specific cultural and professional needs of Bangladeshi educators. To situate these issues within the broader structural and institutional framework of higher education in Bangladesh, the next chapter examines the historical development, organizational diversity, and policy context that shape ESL teaching and PD practices in the country.

Chapter 2: Setting the Context

This chapter outlines the structural, historical, and institutional landscape of higher education in Bangladesh, providing context for the study. It begins by describing the evolution of the higher-education system, tracing its colonial roots and subsequent transformation following national independence. The chapter then examines the organizational diversity of higher education institutions (HEIs), classifying them by type and governance structure. This is followed by a discussion of academic offerings and their alignment with national development goals. Next, the chapter discusses the growth of both public and private universities, focusing on the legislative, financial, and regulatory frameworks that support each sector. The roles of key governmental bodies, particularly the University Grants Commission of Bangladesh (UGC), are delineated to illustrate the mechanisms of oversight and coordination. The financing of universities is also discussed, with attention paid to disparities between public and private institutions.

The chapter then turns to the rise of English as a medium of instruction (EMI) and its implications for equity and access. It examines how the prominence of English in higher education reflects broader socio-economic divides and the global positioning of Bangladeshi graduates. This section also assesses the pedagogical and infrastructural challenges faced by institutions in implementing effective English language teaching (ELT) programs. Finally, the chapter underscores the need for targeted teacher professional development (TPD) to support EMI in higher education. It concludes by highlighting the systemic and policy-level adjustments required to ensure inclusive and high-quality education across Bangladesh's higher-education landscape.

Higher Education in Bangladesh

In Bangladesh, education is structured into 20 grades, spanning from pre-primary to the PhD level. Higher education begins after completing 12 years of formal schooling and includes undergraduate, postgraduate, and doctoral programs (Chowdhury et al., 2020; Sarkar & Hossain, 2020). Postsecondary education encompasses various educational streams, including engineering, medicine, nursing, health sciences, basic sciences, information technology, business studies, agricultural studies, and vocational training (Chowdhury et al., 2020; Huq & Huque, 2014; Sarkar & Hossain, 2020). The introduction of higher education in Bengal during British rule was primarily designed to create a skilled workforce to support British governance, business, and commerce. After the partition of India in 1947 and the subsequent formation of Pakistan and Bangladesh in 1971, the objectives of higher education shifted towards national development goals. However, political and bureaucratic hurdles during Pakistan's rule impeded these reforms (Chowdhury et al., 2020; Sarkar & Hossain, 2020). Following Bangladesh's independence, multiple commissions and committees were established to propose reforms to higher education. Despite these efforts, the implementation of such recommendations was delayed due to political instability, student protests, and inadequate budgetary allocation (Sarkar & Hossain, 2020).

Structure and Diversity

Higher education in Bangladesh is typically associated with postsecondary education programs delivered by universities, with various institutions affiliated with universities contributing to this system (Asian Development Bank, 2014; Rahman, 2022; Rahman et al., 2019a). These institutions include a range of affiliated colleges and institutions, comprising the country's diverse HEIs. Bangladesh's HEIs are categorized into six distinct types, each providing

specific educational offerings (Rahman, 2022; Rahman et al., 2019a). These are degree colleges, Madrasahs, university colleges, private universities, public universities, and, finally, Bangladesh Open University (Chowdhury et al., 2020; Rahman, 2022; Rahman et al., 2019a).

In the first instance are degree colleges affiliated with the National University, which offer three-year undergraduate degree programs, such as the Bachelor of Arts (BA), Bachelor of Social Science (BSS), Bachelor of Science (BSc), and Bachelor of Business Studies (BBS) (Chowdhury et al., 2020; Rahman, 2022; Rahman et al., 2019a). National University, a public entity, plays a key role in the education landscape by overseeing these programs (Chowdhury et al., 2020; Rahman, 2022; Rahman et al., 2019a). Second, Madrasahs provide Islamic education, offering Fazil (bachelor's degree) and Kamil (master's degree) programs under the supervision of the Islamic Arabic University (Asian Development Bank, 2014; Chowdhury et al., 2020; Hasan et al., 2024; Rahman, 2022; Rahman et al., 2019a). The Islamic Arabic University, also a public institution, regulates these specialized religious programs, contributing to the diversity of Bangladesh's higher-education offerings.

The third type of institution, university colleges, are affiliated with both the National University and other public universities. These colleges offer both bachelor's (honors) and master's degrees (Asian Development Bank, 2014; Rahman et al., 2019a). The university colleges play a critical role in providing specialized education in diverse fields under the guidance of government-affiliated universities. The fourth category encompasses private universities, which offer undergraduate, graduate, and research programs in various fields (Asian Development Bank, 2014; Rahman et al., 2019a). These universities, operating under private ownership, have emerged as key players in the higher-education sector in Bangladesh, catering to a growing demand for higher education.

The fifth category consists of public universities that provide undergraduate, graduate, and research programs. These government-owned institutions play a pivotal role in higher education, offering a wide range of academic programs and contributing significantly to research and development (Asian Development Bank, 2014). Finally, Bangladesh Open University (BOU) provides distance-learning opportunities through its undergraduate and graduate programs (Asian Development Bank, 2014; Rahman et al., 2019a). As a government institution, BOU focuses on making higher education accessible to a broader audience, particularly those who may not be able to attend traditional universities (Asian Development Bank, 2014; Rahman et al., 2019a).

These institutions collectively contribute to the profile of higher education in Bangladesh, offering a variety of programs that cater to different academic and professional needs. According to Rahman et al. (2019a), these institutions provide a mix of traditional, religious, and specialized programs, reflecting the dynamic needs of the nation's students. The range of options reflects the efforts to create an inclusive system that meets the needs of various student demographics (Asian Development Bank, 2014; Rahman et al., 2019c). The government's emphasis on both public- and private-sector involvement further ensures that education remains a priority within the national development agenda. While introducing English from the kindergarten level in Bangladesh aligns with global trends, English has formally been a compulsory subject starting from Grade 1, and research shows that its success depends on teacher preparedness, pedagogical quality, and contextual responsiveness (Government of India, 2020; Indrarathne & McCulloch, 2022; Rahman et al., 2019a; Talukder et al., 2022). Without adequately trained teachers and age-appropriate materials, early English instruction often yields limited communicative outcomes, particularly in rural areas (Rahman et al., 2019a; Talukder et

al., 2022). Comparative studies from Sri Lanka and India echo these concerns, highlighting that early exposure alone is insufficient without systemic support (Government of India, 2020; Indrarathne & McCulloch, 2022).

Academic Offerings in Bangladesh's HEIs

Sarkar and Hossain (2020) reported that Bangladesh's higher-education system is rooted in British rule in India and is the legacy of the United Kingdom's social, political, and educational systems. Furthermore, they note that the Indian subcontinent gained independence in 1947 and was divided into two different countries, Pakistan and India. Bangladesh became a part of Pakistan and was called East Pakistan. In what was then Pakistan, there was no major effort to reform higher education. Following Bangladesh's independence from Pakistan in 1971, several uncoordinated steps were taken to enhance higher-education standards, both in the public and private sectors. Despite official independence from British colonial rule in the mid-1900s, Britain's colonial history remained a significant influence on the national system's educational curriculum (Ali et al., 2023; Ali & Hamid, 2021; Barua, 2007; Sultana & Roshid, 2021). However, the real transition began very recently with the World Bank's sponsorship of the Bangladesh University Grants Commission's Higher Education Quality Enhancement Project (HEQEP) and the transformation of teaching-learning pedagogy, as well as continuous improvement of course curricula based on the input and involvement of key participants—namely, university academic and administrative staff. This curriculum work has been an ongoing project (Sarkar & Hossain, 2020). The higher-education sector of Bangladesh offers five distinct types of education: General Education, Science and Technology and Engineering Education, Medical Education, Agricultural Education, and Distance Education. The sector also provides Vocational and Madrasah education. These education types are designed to cater to the diverse

academic needs of students and offer specialized skills and knowledge in their respective domains.

Modern society's growth largely depends on the meaning and standard of higher education, and such education has immense potential to foster prosperity in developing countries (Monem & Baniamin, 2010; Reed & Fazey, 2021; Whitton et al., 2021). These scholars also mentioned that universities transform the world's culture and remain the culture-shift and growth hubs in local communities. This idea is observable in the case of Bangladesh, where different education commissions set up have emphasized the unlocking of talent at all levels of society and the development of a pool of highly qualified individuals to contribute to national-level development. Nevertheless, these universities are very poor operationally and have not changed anything regarding improving teaching quality or providing opportunities for TPD (Afroz et al., 2024; Das, 2021; Hamid & Rahman, 2019; Hossen, 2023; Kabir & Chowdhury, 2021; Kader & Salam, 2019; Monem & Baniamin, 2010; Nur & Short, 2019; Parvin, 2017; Rahman, 2020; Raqib, 2019; Wilson, 2021; Younus, 2023). Improving teaching and learning, incorporating modern teaching methods, and nurturing teacher and student relationships are all approaches that would enhance Bangladesh's higher education culture.

The Growth of Public and Private Universities

Historically, the region now known as Bangladesh lacked adequate opportunities for higher education during British colonial rule (Hamid & Sultana, 2024; Huq & Huque, 2014; Imam, 2005; Kabir, 2011; Monem & Baniamin, 2010; Sultana & Roshid, 2021). This situation was eventually resolved by establishing the first teaching-cum-residential university in the capital city of Dhaka in 1921 (Kabir, 2011; Monem & Baniamin, 2010; Sarkar & Hossain, 2020). This initiative catalyzed the growth of higher education in the country. At the time of

Bangladesh's independence in 1971, there was only a modest count of six universities in the country (Hamid & Sultana, 2024; Monem & Baniamin, 2010). Since then, the higher-education sector in the country has undergone a significant transformation. During the 1990s, Bangladesh saw a rise in privatization in the higher-education sector due to adopting neoliberalist ideas and creating the Private University Act of 1992 (Hamid & Sultana, 2024). This new legislation led to the establishment of a new private university system in Bangladesh, with private higher education becoming the fastest-growing sector in the country. The government approved the first private university, North South University (NSU), just three months after enacting the Private University Act of 1992 (Kabir & Chowdhury, 2021). The Government of Bangladesh enacted the Private University Act in 1992 and again in 2010, considering the growing demand for higher education (Kabir & Chowdhury, 2021). Currently, there are more than 50 public universities, and the number of private universities has exceeded 115 (UGC, 2024).

Two ministries, namely the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education and the Ministry of Education, are responsible for the overall education administration and management of Bangladesh's education system (Sarkar & Hossain, 2020). In partnership with the UGC and the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education, the Ministry of Education is the leading body for higher-education management in Bangladesh. With prior UGC approval, public and private universities are permitted to offer higher education (Sarkar & Hossain, 2020). The UGC was founded in 1973 with the goal of defining university-level education needs, drawing up a specific plan for the advancement of higher education, evaluating the financial needs of universities, collecting funds from the government and assigning the same to universities, encouraging the assessment of universities, and enabling growth activities of universities and their academic departments and institutes (Huq & Huque, 2014; Kabir & Webb, 2018; Sarkar & Hossain, 2020).

Financing Public and Private Universities

The funding structure for education varies based on the ownership of educational institutions in Bangladesh. Public higher-education institutions are largely government-supported (about 90 percent), while a small part of the overall requirement (about 10 percent) is supported by tuition fees (Sarkar & Hossain, 2020). On the other hand, private higher-education institutions are funded from their revenue; non-governmental (affiliated) educational institutions are partly funded by the government (about 60 percent) and about 40 percent funded from their revenue, such as tuition fees (Rahman & Avan, 2016; Sarkar & Hossain, 2020). The recurrent and developmental spending categories of private universities, public schools, and other higher-education institutions are similar to those of public universities, although the funding sources are different (Chowdhury et al., 2020; Monem & Baniamin, 2010; Sarkar & Hossain, 2020). While the proportions allocated to recurrent expenditures (such as salaries, benefits, and operational costs) and developmental expenditures (such as infrastructure, research, and capital investment) may vary, the classifications under which spending is tracked remain largely consistent across institutions (Monem & Baniamin, 2010; Sarkar & Hossain, 2020). To alleviate financial strain, numerous public universities have introduced evening courses, particularly in market-driven disciplines (Abdullah, 2023; Alamgir, 2021; Kabir, 2013, 2020). This initiative aims to generate supplementary revenue, with many prominent institutions prioritizing profit-oriented fields to optimize returns. However, in an annual report, UGC authorities recently instructed public universities to shut down their evening degree programs. The reason behind this decision is that these courses have been operating without proper regulation and have been deemed to serve commercial purposes (Abdullah, 2023; Alamgir, 2021).

Governance and Regulation of Public Universities

Although public universities in Bangladesh receive almost all their funding from the government (Asian Development Bank, 2014), they are autonomous institutions governed by their own statutory bodies. These bodies include the senate (although only a few public universities have this institutional body), the syndicate (six public universities have a Board of Regents in place of a syndicate), the academic council (made up of deans, department chairs, full professors, elected representatives of junior faculty members, and a few external members), and the finance committee (Chowdhury et al., 2020; Kabir, 2011). The syndicate is the distinguished executive body overseeing and managing academic, administrative, and operational functions, ensuring the university operates smoothly and efficiently at a strategic level (Chowdhury et al., 2020; Kabir, 2011). The vice chancellor serves as the chair of all these bodies. The UGC has the authority to grant permission for public universities to create new faculty positions and to expand physically to accommodate additional academic faculties (Huq & Huque, 2014; Uddin et al., 2011; UGC, 2024). The UGC is accountable to the national parliament and receives annual budgetary approval. Its core responsibilities include promoting and coordinating higher education, ensuring the universities maintain high standards, assessing public universities' financial needs, and advising the government on university-related matters (Asian Development Bank, 2014; Huq & Huque, 2014; Uddin et al., 2011). The UGC does not assume a direct supervisory role over universities but instead serves as a regulatory and spokesperson body for them (Asian Development Bank, 2014; UGC, 2024). It acts as an intermediary between universities and the government, ensuring that universities comply with government policies while maintaining academic autonomy.

Management and Regulations of Private Universities

Private universities in Bangladesh are managed by a Board of Trustees, syndicate, and academic council (Asian Development Bank, 2014). They are financed by board members, donors (excluding board members), grants, and student fees without government contribution. The Board of Trustees comprises the university's sponsors, numbering between nine and 21 as per the provisions of the Private University Act of 2010, and is chaired by one of its members (Chowdhury et al., 2020). The board wields ultimate power in governing a private university, though the syndicate also holds some authority. According to the Private University Act of 2010, the vice chancellor serves as an ex-officio member of the Board of Trustees, as well as the chief academic and administrative officer of the university, who reports to the syndicate and board (Chowdhury et al., 2020). The vice-chancellor, like in public universities, serves as the syndicate's president; however, the revenue profile often differs, as private universities tend to charge high tuition and additional fees comparable to wealthier countries, generating substantial profits. Unfortunately, only select students from high-income families can access higher education at these institutions.

While some private universities show promise, balanced competition between public and private universities is necessary to improve educational standards. Government and regulators are responsible for ensuring that private universities meet adequate standards. As emphasized by the UGC and higher-education scholars, private institutions should establish an administrative infrastructure on par with their public university counterparts, including appointing vice-chancellors and other statutory bodies (Ashraf et al., 2016; Khan & Rahman, 2023; Monem & Baniamin, 2010; Rahman, 2019; Sarkar & Hossain, 2020). In many cases, administrative structures are not established in universities (Hossain, 2021; Huda et al., 2010; Kabir & Webb,

2018). Instead, the appointment of vice-chancellors is based on recommendations from university sponsors, with the chancellor having the final say. These university sponsors are known to exert significant influence over the management and running of the university, often playing a pivotal role in decision-making processes (Choi et al., 2021; Chowdhury & Sejan, 2021; Hossain, 2021; Kabir & Webb, 2018). Establishing clear guidelines is essential to promote a sound governance system in private universities. Private universities must also adhere to strict compliance in appointing the required full-time faculty and ensuring that standard academic logistics and facilities are in place. To make private institutes more accessible, a practical tuition cap can be implemented, and provisions should be made to enable students from low-income backgrounds to pursue their studies in these institutions.

The Promise and Perils of Private Universities in Bangladesh

During the 1990s, the government acknowledged the pressing need to establish private universities in Bangladesh, recognizing that public institutions could not meet the growing demand for higher education (Khan, 2018; Monem & Baniamin, 2010). Khan (2018) reported, however, that many Bangladeshi students and their families cannot afford to enroll in the programs offered by private universities.

The history of higher education in Bangladesh was marked by a significant moment when the government's monopoly on providing higher education ended with the ratification of the Private University Act 1992 (Kabir & Chowdhury, 2021; Monem & Baniamin, 2010). This paved the way for establishing the first-ever government-approved private university in 1992, which was soon followed by many more (Kabir & Chowdhury, 2021; Monem & Baniamin, 2010). However, although private universities are experiencing rapid growth, they face several significant challenges that require attention and resolution. These challenges include non-

adherence to legal regulations, inconsistent policies regarding admissions and examinations, opaque financial practices, insufficient full-time faculty, inadequate infrastructure, deficient laboratory and library amenities, a dearth of co-curricular and extra-curricular opportunities, and a tendency to prioritize profit over academic integrity (Huq & Huque, 2014; Kabir & Chowdhury, 2021). Most private universities are relatively small and offer limited subject-matter expertise. Many lack proper infrastructure, including a well-equipped campus and full-time faculty, and they must rely on part-time instructors and rented facilities. Regulations for private universities must be strengthened and enforced to ensure quality education.

The Importance of English Language Teaching in Higher Education in Bangladesh

The role of English Language Teaching (ELT) and English as a Second Language (ESL) courses in higher education, especially in Bangladesh, has gained critical importance in recent decades (Hamid & Al Amin, 2022; Khan & Sultana, 2021). English serves not only as a medium of communication but also as a gateway to global academic and professional opportunities (Chowdhury & Roshid, 2021; Khan et. al., 2021a; Pennycook, 1995; Zhang, 2024). Both public and private universities and colleges in Bangladesh have been actively incorporating ELT and ESL programs, reflecting the demand for English proficiency as a key determinant of academic success and employability (Hamid & Al Amin, 2022; Hamid & Sultana, 2024; Rahman et al., 2019a).

The prominence of English within Bangladesh's higher-education system has its roots in the country's colonial past when English was established as the language of administration and education (Ali & Hamid, 2021). Despite a resurgence of linguistic nationalism favoring Bangla following independence in 1971 (Hamid & Sultana, 2024), English has maintained a significant presence in higher education, primarily due to its association with global academic and economic

opportunities. The privatization of higher education in the 1990s further entrenched the dominance of English, particularly as private institutions adopted EMI to attract students seeking a competitive global education (Kabir, 2020; Kabir & Chowdhury, 2021). Today, English is not only prevalent in commerce and international communication, but it also represents a socio-linguistic divide, where proficiency in English is perceived as a marker of privilege and professional competence (Khan & Sultana, 2021; Hamid & Al Amin, 2022). This divide is exacerbated by socio-economic disparities, rendering English a desirable yet contested commodity closely linked to neoliberal ideals of education as a means of enhancing human capital (Hamid & Sultana, 2024).

The Bangladeshi government has recognized the importance of English in the globalized world and made English a compulsory subject beginning in Grade 1 in its 2010 Education Policy (Khan & Sultana, 2021). However, challenges such as inadequate resources, untrained teachers, and limited infrastructural facilities have hindered the effective teaching and learning of English across the country (Ali & Hamid, 2022; Imam, 2005; Kader & Salam, 2019). Consequently, the ability to acquire proficiency in English has become a marker of social stratification, with access to high-quality English language education being largely confined to the affluent sections of society, particularly those attending private universities (Hamid & Al Amin, 2022). This inequitable landscape is reinforced in higher education, where ELT plays a pivotal role, given that English has become the dominant medium of instruction in both public and private universities (Hamid & Sultana, 2024; Khan & Sultana, 2021).

Universities in Bangladesh, especially private institutions, have strategically positioned English as a medium for instruction to cater to the needs of students aiming for both local and international opportunities (Hamid & Erling, 2016). The rapid expansion of EMI within higher

education demonstrates the growing demand for English proficiency as a gateway to academic success and employability. English is not only viewed as facilitating communication in a globalized world but also as a symbol of educational attainment and professional growth (Chowdhury & Roshid, 2021; Khan et al., 2021a).

One of the driving forces behind the proliferation of ELT programs is the socio-economic divide that often privileges English-speaking individuals with better access to employment and educational resources (Chowdhury & Kabir, 2014; Khan & Sultana, 2021). This division, often manifest in the disparity between urban and rural students, has been highlighted as a key issue in Bangladesh's education system. In urban centers, particularly in private universities, students have greater access to resources that allow them to excel in English, whereas in rural areas, students frequently lack the necessary infrastructure and exposure to attain the same level of proficiency (Rahman, 2015).

Moreover, English is not just about academic instruction but is also seen as integral to the broader national development agenda. The English in Action (EIA) (Rahman et al., 2019a) project, for example, was designed to enhance the English language capabilities of millions of Bangladeshi students and teachers, reinforcing the connection between English proficiency and national development (Hamid, 2016). The linkage between ELT and economic development highlights the critical role of HEIs in preparing graduates for participation in both local and global economies.

English as a Medium of Instruction

The expansion of ELT and ESL programs in Bangladesh's HEIs has been driven by the growing demand for English proficiency in the global job market. Private universities have embraced English as the de facto medium of instruction, although there is no formal requirement

for them to do so under the Private University Act of 1992 (Khan & Sultana, 2021). This adoption of English is often justified by these institutions' claims of modeling themselves after North American or European universities, with many private universities in Bangladesh following semester systems, credit hours, and grading systems like those in the United States (Khan & Sultana, 2021).

The rapid growth of private universities in Bangladesh, which now number over 115, has been largely fueled by the limited capacity of public universities to accommodate the increasing number of students seeking higher education (Khan & Sultana, 2021). Public universities, on the other hand, have been slower to adopt English as the primary medium of instruction, primarily due to institutional inertia, political interference, and resistance from faculty members who are more comfortable teaching in Bangla (Hamid & Al Amin, 2022; Khan & Sultana, 2021). However, the pressures of globalization and the demand for English proficiency in the job market have led to a gradual increase in the use of English in public universities as well.

Adopting English as the medium of instruction (EMI) in higher education has significant implications for students, faculty, and the broader educational landscape in Bangladesh. Private universities have made EMI a cornerstone of their academic programs, often promoting the use of English as enhancing students' employability and global mobility (Khan & Sultana, 2021). This has created a situation where English proficiency is not only a prerequisite for academic success but also a key determinant of social mobility (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 2001; Lai & Idris, 2025).

The dominance of EMI poses challenges for students from Bangla-medium backgrounds, who often struggle to adapt to the demands of an English-dominated academic environment. Many students find themselves at a disadvantage due to their limited proficiency in English,

leading to feelings of alienation and frustration. As one student noted, “In the context of Bangladesh, English is seen as a posh language by a lot of people” (Khan & Sultana, 2021, p. 291).

EMI Across HEIs

The disparity between EMI policies and actual practices is particularly pronounced across different types of HEIs in Bangladesh. While private universities uniformly employ EMI, public universities present a different picture. As Hamid and Sultana (2024) highlight, institutions such as medical and engineering universities predominantly use English due to the unavailability of academic resources in Bangla. However, in other fields, particularly in non-specialist universities, there is greater flexibility, with both English and Bangla being used in varying proportions. The socio-linguistic divide in EMI is also evident in students’ experiences based on their prior education. Students from English-medium schools often have a smoother transition to EMI in universities, whereas those from Bangla-medium schools face significant challenges (Hamid & Sultana, 2024). This variation in EMI practices across institutions underscores the complexities of implementing a uniform language policy in higher education in Bangladesh.

EMI and Social Divides

The effectiveness of EMI in Bangladeshi higher education remains a contentious issue. While EMI is intended to facilitate access to global knowledge and improve students’ English language skills, in practice, it often falls short of these goals. Hamid and Sultana (2024) point out that students, particularly those from Bangla-medium backgrounds, struggle with linguistic challenges when transitioning to an EMI environment. This difficulty when transitioning often results in poor comprehension of academic content, which hinders both language learning and

the acquisition of discipline-specific knowledge. Moreover, the reliance on English in higher education has been criticized for perpetuating social inequalities.

Notably, students from affluent backgrounds, who often have access to high-quality English education, tend to thrive in EMI environments, while those from lower socio-economic backgrounds struggle to keep up. This linguistic divide has profound implications for educational equity and social justice in Bangladesh, as EMI advantages are largely reserved for those who can afford private English-medium schooling (Hamid & Sultana, 2024). Students from English-medium schools experience a smoother transition to EMI at the university level, whereas students from Bangla-medium schools face substantial challenges, compounded by socio-economic dynamics that reinforce class divisions. Students from privileged backgrounds, more likely to have attended English-medium schools, often achieve greater academic success in EMI settings, leaving those from disadvantaged backgrounds at a further disadvantage. Consequently, the reliance on English in higher education has drawn criticism for perpetuating social inequalities, raising concerns that EMI may deepen existing class divides rather than serve as a pathway to social mobility.

Moreover, the quality of ELT in higher education in Bangladesh is significantly influenced by socio-economic disparities, which create a digital divide that impacts students' access to resources and outcomes. Students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds are less likely to own the devices necessary for online learning or have access to stable internet connections, placing them at a further disadvantage in ELT contexts (Kabir & Hasnat, 2021; Khan et al., 2021b). These disparities are particularly pronounced in rural areas, where students often attend under-resourced public institutions and lack access to supplementary English learning resources available in urban centers (Rahman & Pandian, 2018).

This inequality in resource availability directly affects students' English language proficiency, as research indicates that those in private institutions—where English is commonly the medium of instruction—tend to achieve higher proficiency levels than their counterparts in public institutions (Hamid & Baldauf, 2014). The contrast in outcomes perpetuates a cycle of privilege, where English language skills serve as a gatekeeping mechanism for social mobility, favoring students from affluent backgrounds. Consequently, students from affluent backgrounds have an advantage. This divide in ELT quality not only limits individual opportunities for academic and professional advancement but also reinforces broader societal inequalities (Hamid & Baldauf, 2014). In summary, the disparity in English language proficiency across educational institutions underscores a systemic inequality that hinders equitable access to social mobility and perpetuates entrenched socio-economic divides in Bangladeshi society.

The Need for TPD for EMI Teachers

The role of teachers in EMI is crucial to the success of the use of this medium in higher education. Teachers are responsible not only for delivering academic content but also for supporting students' English language development. However, many teachers in Bangladesh face significant challenges in implementing EMI, particularly in public institutions where English proficiency levels among both students and faculty members vary widely. As Hamid and Sultana (2024) note, many teachers in public universities are not fully proficient in English, which affects their ability to deliver content effectively in an EMI environment. This lack of proficiency in English is particularly problematic in subjects that require complex language use, such as the humanities and social sciences, where critical engagement with academic texts is essential. In these cases, teachers may resort to code-switching between English and Bangla to ensure that students understand the material. While this can be an effective strategy for facilitating

comprehension, it also undermines the goals of EMI by limiting students' exposure to English (Hamid & Sultana, 2024).

The challenges faced by teachers in EMI highlight the need for more robust teacher training and PD programs. As Hamid and Sultana (2024) argue, many teachers in Bangladeshi HEIs lack the necessary language competencies and pedagogical knowledge to effectively implement EMI. This shortcoming is particularly true in public universities, where language support for both students and teachers is often insufficient. To address these challenges, Hamid and Sultana (2024) recommend that teacher training programs focus on developing both English language proficiency and subject-specific pedagogical competency. In addition, PD programs should include training on how to integrate language instruction into content teaching, so that teachers can better support students' language development alongside their academic learning. Considering these recommendations, institutions bear a critical responsibility to ensure that ESL teachers have access to sustained and contextually relevant PD opportunities that respond to the dynamic demands of language and content integration in EMI settings (Hamid & Sultana, 2024).

Conclusion

This chapter has provided a comprehensive overview of the historical, structural, and institutional foundations shaping the higher-education landscape in Bangladesh. It has traced the evolution of the system from its colonial inception to its current complex structure, characterized by the coexistence of diverse institutional types and governance models. The chapter examined the differentiated roles of public and private universities, financial arrangements, regulatory mechanisms, and the increasing significance of EMI. It also discussed the socio-economic and pedagogical implications of ELT and the urgent need for targeted TPD to enhance the efficacy of EMI.

These contextual elements form a critical backdrop for understanding the forces that influence higher-education policy and practice in Bangladesh. The interplay between institutional structures, language policies, and socio-economic disparities underscores the importance of a nuanced, context-sensitive approach to educational reform. This chapter's analysis establishes the foundation upon which the study's theoretical framing and review of existing scholarship will be constructed.

With the contextual groundwork now established, the dissertation turns next to an in-depth review of the literature. Chapter 3 critically engages with the body of research related to higher-education policy, language planning, equity in education, and teacher development, situating this study within broader academic debates and identifying gaps that the present research seeks to address.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

This chapter critically examines the literature relevant to the neoliberal restructuring of English Language Teaching (ELT) in Bangladeshi higher education. It begins by outlining the conceptual framework, focusing on neoliberalism's intersection with economics and education, and its implications for language policy and pedagogy. The review then explores the impact of neoliberal reforms on the ELT landscape in Bangladesh, including shifts in policy, pedagogy, and institutional governance across both the public and private sectors. This is followed by a discussion of the massification and marketization of higher education and their effects on ELT provision. Subsequent sections address the roles and challenges of ELT practitioners, particularly regarding teacher professional development (TPD), the quality of instruction, and systemic constraints. The chapter concludes with a review of national and international initiatives aimed at enhancing ESL teaching quality, highlighting both progress and persistent gaps. Through this structure, the chapter situates the present study within ongoing scholarly debates and identifies critical areas for further inquiry.

Conceptual Framework: Neoliberalism, Economics, and Education

Recent research suggests that neoliberalism's impact as a fundamental aspect of the current political economy extends to the policies surrounding English language learning, teaching, and testing in a globalized world (Ali & Hamid, 2021; Block, 2018; Holborow, 2015; Kubota, 2011; Price, 2014). The notion that governments should facilitate the growth of a "free" market (Holborow, 2015, p. 1) is central to neoliberalism, a school of economic thought that posits that the market should guide all human actions. Moreover, neoliberalism is characterized by deregulation, as argued by Block (2018). It holds that a country's economic growth is best accelerated by minimizing state interference in the market and the country's economic domain

(Gasser, 2024). The goal is to create an environment that enables individuals to invest in the market to pursue their own desires and goals, turning them into effective entrepreneurs. By investing in market-valued goods, individuals can empower themselves and society more wholly, as Holborow (2015) explains. Often, this process involves the privatization of public sectors. Neoliberalism extends its influence beyond economics into the realm of education, shaping policies that are consistent with its market-driven principles.

During the rise of a neoliberal economy in Bangladesh, the employment sector underwent significant transformation (Alam et al., 2022; Ali et al., 2023; Hasan et al., 2024). The emphasis shifted towards individuals and their skills as crucial components in promoting a free-market economy (Alam et al., 2022; Ali et al., 2023; Hasan et al., 2024). In the 1990s, as the job market evolved, English became a critical skill for those seeking employment opportunities (Kabir, 2020; Karim et al., 2023). With growing connections, communication, and transactions between nations, access to globalized employment became increasingly reliant on proficiency in English. Therefore, ELT policy and curricula have highlighted the importance of English as a vital skill for employment. In this postcolonial context, a significant ideological shift occurred in which English transformed from an academic subject to a form of human capital. This change was propelled by a powerful force, namely the market, which has elevated dominant languages to the status of commodities (Heller & Duchêne, 2016; Holborow, 2015). The focus shifted towards developing learners' communication skills, as these abilities were considered crucial in adapting to the evolving job market of the 1990s.

Proficiency in the English language has now become a crucial skill for individuals and nations to succeed in the highly competitive world market. For Bangladesh, a country that is aspiring to become a leading player in various industries, it is imperative that its citizens are

equipped with strong English language skills. However, achieving this requires a solid foundation of high-quality English language education, which can only be imparted by skilled, competent, and dedicated teachers. Moreover, the emergence of linguistic instrumentalism in ELT policy and the emphasis on skill-based pedagogy was made possible by the neo-liberalization of the Bangladeshi ELT field. This progress was achieved through national-global partnerships in the context of globalization and later through the promotion of deregulation and privatization in the country's ELT sector (Hamid & Rahman, 2019).

Similarly, the spread of neoliberal policies has reshaped education systems globally since the 1970s. Beginning in the 1970s, most countries worldwide, including influential nations like the United States, the United Kingdom, and China, have increasingly embraced and implemented neoliberal policy frameworks across various sectors of national development (Kabir & Chowdhury, 2021; Peters, 2023). In education specifically, neoliberal policies were first implemented at the primary and secondary levels (Barnawi, 2019; Kabir, 2020; Kabir & Chowdhury, 2021). According to Levinsson et al. (2020), "Over the past two decades, we have witnessed how pervasive neoliberal policies have dramatically transformed public school teaching and education at the university level" (p. 7). In higher education, they were introduced as part of a broader privatization strategy, mainly focusing on non-academic services such as catering and security (Kabir, 2020; Kabir & Chowdhury, 2021).

Since the late 1980s, there has been a widespread global shift toward adopting a commercial model for various aspects of higher education, including knowledge, skills, curriculum, finance, accounting, and organizational management (Koopman & Koopman, 2021; Levidow, 2007; Schraedley et al., 2021). Numerous critics contend that these neoliberal policies are strongly connected to the global activities of international financial institutions (Barnawi,

2019; Kabir, 2020; Kabir & Chowdhury, 2021; Steger & Roy, 2021). These institutions, particularly the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank (WB), and regional development banks, provide substantial financial support to developing countries, often tied to policy-reform initiatives as part of their aid programs (Kabir, 2020; Kabir & Chowdhury, 2021). During the 1990s, Bangladesh's higher-education sector experienced substantial transformations, marking a new era aligned with global trends in higher-education reform, predominantly driven by market-oriented economic forces (Kabir & Chowdhury, 2021). The government enacted important policy frameworks, including the Private University Acts as well as the 20-Year Strategic Plan for Higher Education (SPHE), 2006–2026 (Kabir, 2020; Kabir & Chowdhury, 2021). These measures were carried out with financial and technical support from the WB (Kabir, 2020; Kabir & Chowdhury, 2021).

The development of higher education in Bangladesh has mirrored global trends. Until 1990, the government solely funded higher education (Kabir, 2020). However, a significant shift occurred in the late 1980s when individuals began establishing private universities (Kabir, 2020). Darul Ihsan University, founded in 1989, and the International University of Business, Agriculture, and Technology (IUBAT), established in 1991, were among the earliest private initiatives in this sector (Kabir, 2020). Additionally, influential academics from public universities, former bureaucrats, and businessmen used their informal networks to advocate for a legal framework supporting private universities. Their efforts led to the government's enactment of the Private University Act in 1992, which facilitated the establishment of private universities in Bangladesh (Kabir, 2011). The neoliberal policy changes in higher education following the 1990s led to a significant expansion of universities in both the public and private sectors in Bangladesh. This period saw a substantial rise in the number of public and private universities

and a marked increase in student enrollment and other academic activities (Kabir, 2020; Kabir & Chowdhury, 2021). Private institutions, unlike public universities, do not receive government funding or benefit from endowments (Anwaruddin, 2013). While some commend these institutions for expanding access to higher education for a broad demographic, others criticize them for diminishing academic standards and treating education as a commercial product (Anwaruddin, 2013; Kabir & Chowdhury, 2021).

Impact of Neoliberalism on ELT in Bangladeshi Higher Education

The influence of neoliberalism on ELT in Bangladeshi higher education is substantial, reshaping its objectives to prioritize employability, competitiveness, and market relevance. Neoliberal policies have led to the commodification of language education, with institutions increasingly competing to offer “marketable” language skills that enhance students’ job prospects (Ali & Hamid, 2021, p. 371). This phenomenon is also referred to as the acquisition of ELT-related skills. Consequently, ELT programs have shifted toward practical, job-oriented skills, often neglecting critical thinking, creativity, and a deeper understanding of language in its cultural contexts. In Bangladeshi higher education, this shift is evident in the growing demand for English as a medium of instruction (EMI) and the proliferation of private language schools that cater to the needs of students seeking to improve their English proficiency for career advancement. The rise of EMI in Bangladeshi universities is a direct consequence of neoliberal policies that prioritize marketable skills over traditional academic values. While EMI may improve students’ language proficiency, concerns arise because the rapid adoption of English-medium instruction often lacks adequate pedagogical planning, relies on insufficiently trained teachers, and marginalizes local languages and knowledge systems—factors that collectively

compromise the overall quality of education (Hamid & Al Amin, 2022; Hamid & Sultana, 2024; Karim et al., 2023).

The neo-liberalization of ELT has also fostered a competitive environment among educational institutions, where success is often measured by students' performances on standardized English language tests. As a result, the role of English language teachers has shifted from that of knowledge facilitators to trainers responsible for producing market-ready graduates (Ali & Hamid, 2022). This trend has had profound implications for the pedagogical approaches used in ELT, with a growing emphasis on skills-based instruction and the adoption of communicative language teaching (CLT) methodologies.

The neoliberal emphasis on market-driven outcomes has also resulted in significant pedagogical shifts within ELT in higher education in Bangladesh. For example, CLT has gained prominence in Bangladesh because it aligns well with neoliberal ideals of productivity, practicality, and the marketability of language skills (Rahman et al., 2010). While CLT is widely regarded as an effective approach for improving communicative competence in English, its dominance in the curriculum reflects the broader neoliberal agenda of linking education to economic outcomes. This shift in pedagogy often results in the neglect of more humanistic approaches to language learning, such as the use of literature to explore diverse cultural perspectives or the development of critical-thinking skills through language analysis (Block et al., 2012). By prioritizing practical language skills over these broader educational goals, neoliberal policies risk reducing ELT to a narrow set of competencies that serve the immediate needs of the market while neglecting the more transformative potential of education.

ELT in the Private and Public Sectors

The neo-liberalization of education has also led to the growing involvement of the private sector in ELT in Bangladesh. Private language schools and universities have capitalized on the demand for English proficiency, offering programs that cater to the needs of students seeking to improve their language skills for career advancement. These institutions often operate on a for-profit basis, where students pay high fees for access to English language education. This profit-driven model can be closely associated with the concept of managerialism in higher education. Moreover, this idea is reinforced by the discussion of Ajayan and Balasubramanian (2020), who contend that new managerialism, evident through policy initiatives and managerial practices, is highly relevant in the higher-education sector, particularly in countries with a significant proliferation of for-profit universities.

The commercialization of ELT in Bangladesh is also evident in the proliferation of standardized language tests, such as the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) and the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), which have become gatekeepers for access to higher education and employment opportunities (Ali & Hamid, 2021). These tests reinforce the commodification of English by placing a monetary value on language proficiency, where success is determined by one's ability to pay for test preparation and fees (Ali & Hamid, 2021).

While much of the focus in discussions of neoliberalism and the commodification of English in higher education in Bangladesh has centered on private universities, it is also important to consider the role of public universities in this context. Public universities, which traditionally have been seen as institutions of social mobility and intellectual development, have not been immune to the pressures of neoliberalism. In fact, many public universities in

Bangladesh have also adopted market-driven policies in response to increasing competition from private institutions and the growing demand for English language instruction (Abdullah, 2023; Ahmed, 2016; Alamgir, 2021).

One of the most significant ways in which public universities have been affected by neoliberalism is through the adoption of EMI to compete with private institutions. Many public universities in Bangladesh have introduced English-medium programs, particularly in disciplines such as business and engineering, where English is seen as essential for success in the global job market.

In addition to the challenges of English-medium instruction, public universities in Bangladesh have also faced increasing pressure to adopt market-driven policies in response to funding constraints. As government funding for higher education has stagnated, many public universities have turned to revenue-generating activities, such as offering fee-paying programs and engaging in partnerships with private companies. This practice has led to concerns about the commercialization of education and the potential for public universities to prioritize profit over their traditional role as institutions of social mobility and intellectual development (Ahmed, 2016).

Massification and Marketization of Higher Education in Bangladesh

The massification of higher education refers to the rapid expansion of access to higher education, often driven by increased demand from a growing population (Gao, 2018; Smolentseva, 2022). In Bangladesh, massification has been accompanied by a shift towards marketization, where higher-education institutions, particularly private universities, operate in a competitive market environment (Ahmed, 2016; Kabir, 2020; Kabir & Webb, 2018). This shift is

closely linked to neoliberal policies that promote the privatization and commodification of education.

As higher education in Bangladesh has become increasingly market-driven, universities have adopted business approaches that prioritize revenue generation and cost-efficiency. This shift has led to a focus on job-oriented programs and courses, with English language proficiency seen as a key selling point for attracting students (Ali et al., 2023). Many private universities in Bangladesh have capitalized on the demand for English language skills by offering English-medium programs and marketing themselves as institutions that can provide students with the linguistic and cultural capital necessary for success in the global economy.

However, the marketization of higher education has also raised concerns about the quality of education being offered. Many private universities prioritize profit over academic rigor, leading to a commodification of English language instruction that focuses on superficial proficiency rather than critical language skills (Ahmed, 2016; Kabir, 2013). This has resulted in a growing gap between the expectations of students, who view English proficiency as offering access to better job opportunities, and the reality of the education being offered, which often falls short of preparing students for the demands of the global marketplace (Ahmed, 2016).

English Language Teachers as Managers

In the neoliberal educational framework, teachers are increasingly expected to function as managers, responsible for guiding students through curricula that are often rigidly designed to meet market demands (Kabir & Webb, 2018). This shift reflects the broader managerialism that neoliberalism brings into education, where teaching is seen as a means of producing human capital rather than a process of personal and intellectual development (Gasser, 2024; Giroux, 2002; Morley, 2023; Skea, 2021). As a result, ELT teachers in Bangladesh often face pressure to

focus on practical language skills that enhance students' employability, such as business English and communicative English, rather than fostering a deeper understanding of language, culture, and critical thinking (Ali et al., 2023; Kabir, 2013; Kabir & Webb, 2018).

This managerial role can create tension for teachers, particularly those who entered the profession with a passion for education and a commitment to fostering critical and creative thinking among their students. Under the neoliberal regime, however, the success of teachers is increasingly measured by their ability to produce measurable outcomes, such as high scores on standardized English language tests—most notably the IELTS and TOEFL—which are often used as benchmarks for academic and professional success (Gu, 2023; Kabir & Webb, 2018; Parcerisa et al., 2022). Consequently, teachers may feel constrained by a system that values efficiency and output over meaningful engagement with the subject matter. Giddens' structuration theory (1979, 1984) offers a useful lens to examine how institutional structures and teacher agency interact within the Bangladeshi ELT context.

Critiques of Neoliberalism and ELT

While the neoliberal approach to ELT in Bangladesh has expanded access to English language education and improved students' employability, it has also faced significant criticism. Critics argue that the market-oriented approach to ELT undermines the broader educational goals of personal development and critical thinking. By focusing solely on practical language skills, ELT programs risk turning students into passive consumers of language rather than active participants in their own learning (Ali & Hamid, 2021).

The emphasis on English in higher education has also raised concerns about linguistic and cultural imperialism. The privileging of English over Bangla reinforces colonial hierarchies and marginalizes local languages and knowledge systems. Scholars, policymakers, educators,

students, and equity advocates have increasingly called for a more balanced approach to language education in Bangladesh, where English is taught alongside Bangla in a way that promotes both global competitiveness and cultural preservation (Hamid & Al Amin, 2022; Mridula & bin Ahsan, 2025; Rahman, 2024; Shahed & Rahman, 2022; Sikder, 2024).

The TPD Continuum in the Bangladeshi Context

TPD refers to the continuous process of acquiring new knowledge and competencies to improve teachers' instructional practices and overall effectiveness (Sadeghi & Richards, 2021). TPD is recognized as crucial for enhancing the quality of teaching and learning, especially in countries like Bangladesh, where systemic and infrastructural challenges often impede educational advancement (Cross et al., 2022; Shahidullah & Rahaman, 2022). Moreover, in the field of ESL teaching in Bangladesh, TPD plays a crucial role in keeping teachers' knowledge current and relevant (Younus, 2023). This notion is echoed by Sadeghi and Richards (2021), who assert that "professional development of language teachers is a key strategy to ensure that teachers stay updated and avoid the risk of leaving the profession" (p. 1).

TPD exists along a continuum beginning with pre-service programs and followed by in-service PD. Pre-service development focuses on training individuals before they enter the teaching profession, while in-service development aims at enhancing the capabilities of those already practicing in the field. The concept of "lifelong learning for professionals" (Lim et al., 2025, p. 5) underscores the idea that teachers' learning and development should be an ongoing process, adapting to the changing needs of education systems and learners (Abou Said & Abdallah, 2024; Halal Orfali et al., 2024). This continuum highlights the dynamic nature of teacher development, which must keep pace with the challenges of education today.

Initial Teacher Education (ITE), often referred to as pre-service professional studies, is designed to prepare novice teachers for their roles in the classroom. According to Fernandes et al. (2023), ITE forms the foundation of teachers' pedagogical competencies and is critical for developing a reflective teaching practice. ITE programs typically cover both theoretical and practical aspects, including classroom management, pedagogy, subject-specific knowledge, and other relevant areas (Fernandes et al., 2023). Pre-service professional development refers to the training future teachers receive during their undergraduate education, preparing them to teach school-aged students effectively (Hills & Sessoms-Penny, 2021). According to Pillay and Naicker (2024), "We believe that initial teacher education is an important site where the ground is prepared for forming what it means to be a teacher" (p. 156). Several scholars assert that pre-service education and PD aim to enhance teachers' expertise, improve individual teaching practices, and foster collective capacity to advance both teaching and learning (Cohan & Honigsfeld, 2011; England et al., 2023).

TPD is a continuous in-service process aimed at improving teachers' competencies throughout their careers. TPD often focuses on pedagogical enhancement, subject expertise, and adaptation to new educational policies or technologies (Fernandes et al., 2023; Halal Orfali et al., 2024; Sadeghi & Richards, 2021). TPD initiatives can take various forms, including workshops, seminars, online courses, or peer mentoring programs. For ESL teachers in Bangladesh, TPD becomes particularly critical due to the dynamic and evolving nature of language teaching in a globalized world (Fernandes et al., 2023).

ITE in the ESL Bangladeshi Context

ITE, or pre-service professional development, in Bangladesh remains an evolving area of focus, often described as lacking and insufficient. Das (2021) highlights that pre-service teacher

training is not mandatory for college-level teachers in Bangladesh, providing commentary on its current status in the country. He explains that pre-service teacher training is rare in Bangladesh, with most teachers entering the profession without formal pedagogical training. For instance, fresh graduates, often recruited through competitive exams such as the 43rd Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) examination, are typically hired based on their academic qualifications without undergoing structured teacher education programs. They are often appointed to teaching positions without pedagogical training, entering classrooms with theoretical knowledge but lacking sufficient practical teaching competencies. Das (2021), as well as Nur and Short (2019), points out that this gap leaves teachers unprepared for the complexities of classroom management, lesson planning, and the use of technology for teaching and learning, all essential professional competencies for navigating contemporary educational environments. The absence of mandatory pre-service training in Bangladesh's higher-education system exacerbates the challenges all teachers face in the country, including ESL teachers. Nur and Short (2019) further emphasize that the absence of structured pre-service training leaves teachers, particularly ESL instructors, without the professional competencies necessary to manage diverse classrooms, implement innovative pedagogies, or respond to the evolving needs of learners in Bangladesh's complex educational landscape.

Given the critical role of ITE in enhancing instructional quality, Bangladesh's ITE system requires significant reform to meet both national and international educational standards. Moreover, Das (2021) states that the lack of formalized pre-service training not only compromises the quality of education but also leads to a cycle where teachers rely on traditional, lecture-based methods without incorporating modern pedagogical techniques. This problem is

particularly evident in ESL classrooms, where CLT approaches are necessary but often neglected due to inadequate teacher preparation (Nur & Short, 2019).

Pre-service teacher education in Bangladesh is also marked by inequities. According to research conducted by various educational scholars, only a select group of teachers—primarily those working in urban, well-funded institutions—have access to advanced ITE programs (Cross et al., 2022; Rab, 2025; Raqib et al., 2023; Siddik & Kawai, 2020; Younus, 2023). In contrast, Das (2021) notes that teachers in rural areas, where the need for quality education is most acute, often lack access to these resources. Symeonidou (2017) also underscores the importance of ITE in promoting inclusive education. She argues that teacher education programs must prepare educators to meet the needs of all students, including those with disabilities. Meeting the needs of all students requires a comprehensive curriculum for pre-service teachers that covers inclusive pedagogies, differentiated instruction, and strategies for creating supportive learning environments (Symeonidou, 2017). Thus, to bridge these gaps and advance towards inclusive, effective pedagogy, it is essential that Bangladesh prioritizes equitable and comprehensive pre-service teacher training as a foundation for sustainable educational improvement.

Continuing Professional Development in the ESL Bangladeshi Context

Continuing professional development (CPD) is a crucial component of lifelong learning for teachers, offering opportunities for ongoing development of pedagogical competencies and professional growth (Afroz et al., 2024). In the context of ESL education, CPD can play a pivotal role in helping teachers stay updated with the latest language teaching methodologies, technologies, and research. CPD programs that focus on communicative language teaching, digital literacy, and learner-centered approaches can significantly enhance the effectiveness of ESL instruction (Richards & Farrell, 2005). Afroz et al. (2024) note, however, that the

implementation of CPD in Bangladesh is challenging. As a result, many teachers rely on informal CPD opportunities such as peer learning and self-study, which, while valuable, may not provide the depth of professional learning needed to address the complex challenges of ESL teaching (Richards & Farrell, 2005).

The concept of PD has been interpreted in various ways, and it can generally be categorized into two main approaches. The first is an individualistic approach that emphasizes isolated, self-directed learning, prioritizing personal autonomy over collaboration. It reinforces existing practices, limiting innovation, continuity, and responsiveness to context, thereby constraining sustainable professional growth (Meletiou-Mavrotheris & Paparistodemou, 2024; Saks et al., 2025). The second is more collaborative, highlighting the social aspect of learning and emphasizing the role of professional communities or collaborative teams in fostering teachers' development (Díaz-Sacco & Muñoz-Salinas, 2024). The literature on PD highlights that the collaborative approach is shaped by both professional and personal factors, along with contextual and social influences (Halal Orfali et al., 2024; Weinberg et al., 2021). According to Cojorn and Sonsupap (2024), a collaborative approach to PD is shaped by three key areas for development: knowledge—shared learning and the exchange of expertise among peers; identity—the development of a teacher's professional self through reflection and interaction; and professional culture—a supportive, team-oriented environment that fosters mutual growth and institutional learning.

In the context of higher education, especially in universities, the interaction among these processes has become increasingly important. In fact, across various international settings, it is argued that research, rather than teaching, is now the primary focus of the work for university lecturers (Canniffe et al., 2024; MacPhail et al., 2018). This shifting emphasis underscores the

significance of research not only as a functional requirement but also as a foundational element in shaping academic identity. Research is central to lecturers' professional identity formation, enhancing knowledge acquisition, fostering autonomy, and integrating teaching with scholarly inquiry. When meaningfully embedded in academic practice, research enables lecturers to construct a researcher identity as a key dimension of their professional self-concept, particularly within supportive scholarly communities (Giladi et al., 2022; Hanauer et al., 2024). In summary, the evolving field of TPD highlights the importance of balancing both self-directed and collaborative approaches to TPD, ensuring that educators remain adaptive and well-equipped to meet the diverse demands of contemporary education systems. This balance is particularly important to consider in higher education when there is a dual need for developing both teacher and researcher identities.

ESL Teaching Quality in Higher Education in Bangladesh: Issues and Challenges

As established in the previous discussion, ESL instruction has gained increasing importance. In Bangladesh, where English holds significant weight as a lingua franca for higher education and international communication, its effective teaching is paramount. Yet, the postsecondary education sector, particularly private institutions, has faced substantial challenges in ensuring quality ESL teaching in Bangladesh. This section delves into the research on issues related to ESL teaching quality in Bangladesh's postsecondary sector, highlighting structural, pedagogical, and policy-related challenges.

Private University Expansion

The rapid growth of private universities in Bangladesh has led to significant concerns regarding education quality, particularly in ESL instruction, which is critical in both domestic and international academic discourse (Ahmed, 2016; Alam et al., 2010; Kabir & Chowdhury,

2021). This privatization of higher education, while increasing accessibility, has raised concerns about the quality of faculty, infrastructure, and curriculum (Ahmed, 2016; Kabir & Chowdhury, 2021). Research indicates that private universities in Bangladesh struggle to hire qualified ESL instructors and provide adequate pedagogical training, resulting in inconsistencies in teaching quality (Ahmed, 2016; Alam & Parvin, 2017; Islam & Stapa, 2021; Younus, 2023). According to Ahmed (2016), “besides inabilities to provide standard education, the quality of students who enroll in these universities and in many cases the ability of faculty members teaching in these institutions can be questionable” (p. 77). Moreover, we must recall that the commodification of education has led to a market-driven approach that prioritizes enrollment numbers over the quality of language instruction (Ahmed, 2016; Huq & Huque, 2014; Kader & Salam, 2019). This prioritization has significant implications for ESL teaching, as language learning is a nuanced and process-driven endeavor that requires sustained pedagogical effort and support.

Inadequate Teacher Training

One of the most pressing issues in ESL teaching in higher education in Bangladesh is the shortage of qualified and trained faculty. According to Alam and Parvin (2017), many ESL instructors in private universities lack formal training in language teaching methodologies, severely impacting the effectiveness of their instruction. In addition, the lack of a structured system for ESL teacher training in Bangladesh exacerbates this issue, leading to reliance on traditional, lecture-based teaching methods that are often ineffective in promoting language acquisition (Kader & Salam, 2019; Khan, 2021). According to Rahman et al. (2018), “The classroom was entirely lecture-based, which made the students a passive audience who occasionally answered some closed-ended questions that warrant their presence in the classroom” (p. 304). Additionally, the absence of continuous PD opportunities for teachers

further compounds the problem. Without proper training in CLT and other modern methodologies, many ESL instructors are unable to implement interactive and learner-centered pedagogical strategies. Consequently, the reliance on didactic teaching methods results in a focus on rote learning and memorization, which undermines students' abilities to develop practical English language skills (Kabir, 2011; Kader & Salam, 2019).

This reliance on underqualified faculty inevitably impacts ESL education quality. Kader and Salam (2019) asserted that “the lack of highly qualified teachers is posing a threat to the quality and expansion of private universities, as they are currently dependent on part-time teachers” (p.115). They also highlighted that many private universities in Bangladesh rely heavily on part-time or adjunct faculty who may not have the appropriate qualifications or teaching experience necessary to deliver effective language instruction. This dependence on part-time teachers is a direct consequence of resource constraints in institutional finance faced by private institutions, which tend to prioritize cost-cutting measures over quality enhancements. As a result, the educational experiences of students, particularly in language-intensive courses like English, suffer from a lack of consistent and dedicated instruction.

In addition to the shortage of qualified faculty, there is also a lack of PD opportunities for existing English language teachers (Raqib, 2019). Although some universities attempt to provide training programs, the effectiveness of these programs is often limited by a lack of resources and institutional commitment to teacher development (Faisal & Ali, 2021; Kader & Salam, 2019; Younus, 2023). Without adequate training, many instructors continue to employ outdated teaching methods, such as rote memorization, which do not foster the critical-thinking and language skills necessary for academic success.

Outdated Curriculum, Pedagogies, and Assessment Practices

Private universities in Bangladesh follow the American semester system, grading, and curriculum standards (Kader & Salam, 2019). In particular, the curriculum for ELT in many Bangladeshi HEIs is another area of concern. Despite adopting curricula modeled on American and British universities, many private universities fail to adequately implement these curricula in practice (Kader & Salam, 2019). Further, instruction and assessment predominantly emphasize memorization rather than fostering critical thinking, leading to a rather monotonous learning experience (Kader & Salam, 2019). This focus undermines educational quality, especially in English language instruction. Additionally, the curriculum lacks regular updates to meet international standards, and most institutions fail to revise it periodically (Chowdhury et al., 2020). Working with outdated curricula hinders students' exposure to current knowledge, modern concepts, and essential skills, leaving them unprepared to adapt to the evolving economic and technological demands of both local and global industries (World Bank, 2018). Moreover, many private universities in Bangladesh adopt curricula that emphasize exam preparation and the acquisition of theoretical knowledge over practical language skills (Hamid & Sultana, 2024). These emphases contrast with CLT, which encourages interaction, communication, and the practical use of language in real-world contexts (Alam et al., 2010; Kader & Salam, 2019). Overall, Bangladesh lags significantly behind international standards in implementing curricula that incorporate effective teaching methodologies, appropriate assessment practices, qualified teachers, and adequate political foresight (Kader & Salam, 2019; Prodhan, 2016).

Furthermore, the heavy reliance on textbooks and exam-oriented teaching practices detracts from the development of students' communicative competencies. Research suggests that

curricula in private universities often fail to incorporate tasks that foster speaking, listening, and writing skills in authentic contexts, thereby limiting students' ability to use English outside the classroom (Kabir, 2021). This issue is compounded by a lack of supplementary materials and resources, such as multimedia tools, which could enhance the learning experience (Faisal & Ali, 2021).

These curriculum-related shortcomings are closely mirrored in the universities' assessment practices, where a similar pattern of superficiality and misalignment with communicative goals persists. A critical challenge in English language assessment practices in Bangladeshi universities is the predominance of rote memorization over practical language use in examinations. Exams in many institutions focus on the recall of grammar rules and vocabulary, rather than evaluating students' ability to apply English in real-life contexts (Alam & Parvin, 2017). This exam-centric approach encourages students to prioritize passing exams over developing meaningful communicative skills. Moreover, the lack of formative assessment methods—such as peer reviews, oral presentations, and group discussions—limits students' opportunities to receive feedback on their practical language use, which is essential for progressive improvement. The high-stakes nature of these assessments also imposes pressure on students and educators, resulting in short-term exam preparation at the expense of long-term language acquisition. Compounding these issues, the assessment system in Bangladeshi private universities often lacks depth and consistency. Although these institutions have adopted semester-based systems with continuous assessments modeled after Western institutions, the implementation remains superficial and inconsistent (Kader & Salam, 2019).

Lack of National Language Education Policy

At the policy level, there is a significant gap between the government's goals for English language education and the realities of its implementation in the postsecondary sector. While the Bangladeshi government recognizes the importance of English for global competitiveness, the absence of a cohesive language education policy that addresses the unique challenges of ESL instruction in private universities is a significant barrier to progress (Khan & Sultana, 2021). The Private University Act of 1992, which facilitated the establishment of private universities, does not provide specific guidelines or standards for ESL instruction, leaving institutions to devise their own curricula and teaching standards (Rahman et al., 2019b). This lack of a unified approach contributes to inconsistent language education quality across universities. As noted by Chowdhury and Kabir (2014), "As for higher education, the Commission found that in the absence of a national language policy and the dilemma regarding which language to use in higher education, students remained weak in both Bengali and English" (p. 14). Consequently, without structured policy guidance, private universities often struggle to implement effective language programs, compromising students' English proficiency and global readiness.

Lack of Investment in TPD and Resources for English Language Teachers

External influences on educational reforms in Bangladesh have led to fragmented, short-term initiatives for underqualified English language teachers rather than comprehensive, long-term solutions. These influences are discussed by Wilson (2021), who points out that many educational reforms in Bangladesh have been driven by donor agencies and international organizations, resulting in fragmented and short-term TPD projects rather than sustained, systemic change. He also mentioned that these projects, while often well-intentioned, tend to focus on immediate results and fail to address the deeper structural issues that hinder the long-

term development of teacher education in the country. Moreover, Wilson observed that resource constraints pose significant barriers to the implementation of reforms. HEIs in Bangladesh often lack the financial and human resources necessary to support effective teacher education and PD programs. Thus, without adequate investment in teacher education, it will be difficult for institutions to provide the kind of high-quality, research-based programs that are necessary for improving ELT in higher education.

The disparity between public and private institutions regarding technological infrastructure further exacerbates the quality divide in ELT. Private universities, generally better funded, adapted more readily to online education during the pandemic. In contrast, public institutions grappled with significant technological challenges, such as unstable internet connections, lack of access to learning management systems, and limited digital literacy among both students and teachers (Hossen, 2023). Khan and Sultana (2021) underscore that these limitations in technology infrastructure prevented many public universities from conducting meaningful virtual classes, thereby reducing student engagement and interaction, essential components of language acquisition. This infrastructural gap not only affects teaching quality but also limits students' ability to develop essential English language skills, particularly in speaking and listening. Again, traditional classrooms in public institutions primarily focus on reading and writing, with limited emphasis on listening and speaking skills, which are critical for real-world communication (Rouf & Rashid, 2021). The pandemic-induced shift to online learning highlighted the urgent need for investment in digital tools and teacher training in technological pedagogical content knowledge (TPACK) to facilitate interactive language learning experiences (Hossen, 2023).

Student Preparedness and Motivation

Another challenge related to ESL instruction in Bangladesh's postsecondary sector is the level of student preparedness and motivation. Research indicates that many students entering private universities in Bangladesh are academically underprepared for the demands of higher education, particularly in terms of English language proficiency (Das, 2021; Islam & Stapa, 2021; Khan et al., 2010; Mazumder, 2014). This problem is partly due to the varying quality of English instruction at the secondary level, which often fails to equip students with the necessary skills for academic success in English-medium postsecondary programs (Islam & Stapa, 2021). The lack of preparation not only hinders student engagement and achievement in English-medium programs, but also poses significant instructional challenges for faculty. In contrast, public universities tend to attract students with stronger academic records, largely due to their reputations and minimal tuition fees. According to Mazumder (2014), "Due to their reputations and negligible tuition rates, public universities in Bangladesh were able to attract higher quality of students with higher grade point averages" (p. 106). This issue not only makes teaching more difficult but also affects student outcomes, as students who are underprepared struggle to keep up with the curriculum.

Socio-cultural perceptions hinder the effective integration of English language instruction in Bangladesh. A key socio-cultural issue is the perception of English as a foreign or elite language, which can create barriers to its widespread adoption and use in educational settings in Bangladesh. Wilson (2021) suggests that many students and teachers in Bangladesh view English as a subject that is disconnected from their daily lives and cultural contexts, which can lead to a lack of motivation and engagement in the classroom. This decoupling of English and everyday life limits students' enthusiasm and commitment to acquiring the language.

That said, the commercialization of higher education in Bangladesh has led to the admission of students who may not have the requisite academic qualifications, as private universities prioritize enrollment over academic merit (Alam et al., 2010; Islam & Stapa, 2021). As a result, many students lack the motivation and preparedness to engage with ESL instruction meaningfully, leading to poor learning outcomes and high dropout rates.

Equitable Access to Quality English Education

Socio-economic disparities significantly impact the accessibility and quality of English language education in Bangladesh, particularly within private universities. The high cost of private university education, particularly in the top-tier institutions, makes it difficult for students from lower-income backgrounds to access quality English instruction (Kader & Salam, 2019). While private universities have attempted to address this issue by offering scholarships and fee waivers, these measures are often insufficient to cover the financial burden faced by many students. At the same time, however, students from rural areas or those who have received their primary and secondary education in Bangla-medium schools often struggle to adapt to the English-medium instruction commonly used in private universities. These students face significant language barriers, which are exacerbated by the inadequate support provided by their institutions. With limited institutional support to bridge this language gap, these students frequently find themselves at a disadvantage compared to peers from English-medium backgrounds, thereby reinforcing educational inequalities across socio-economic lines.

Institutional Support and Resources for ELT

One of the key determinants of teaching quality, particularly in language education, is the level of institutional support provided to both students and instructors. In many private universities in Bangladesh, English language departments are underfunded and lack adequate

resources, including access to up-to-date teaching materials and technology that could enhance student learning. According to Kader and Salam (2019), infrastructure such as language labs, computer access, modern instructional materials, and modern libraries is often deficient in many private institutions, particularly newer or less established ones. This shortage is particularly evident in newly established universities that have not yet matured in terms of academic resources (Kader & Salam, 2019). According to Kader and Salam (2019), newly established universities are often housed in rented spaces that are not conducive to high-quality education, further exacerbating the problem. These limitations severely hamper the ability of both students and teachers to engage in meaningful language learning activities that go beyond traditional classroom instruction.

The absence of well-equipped language labs, for example, means that students miss out on opportunities to develop their listening and speaking skills in interactive and immersive environments. Additionally, limited access to online resources, such as academic journals, language learning software, and multimedia content, further restricts students' ability to practice and refine their English language skills independently. In a globalized world where digital literacy and access to information are increasingly important, this lack of resources is a significant drawback for Bangladeshi students, particularly those from lower-income or rural backgrounds who may already be at a disadvantage in terms of their language proficiency.

Lack of Opportunities for TPD for Teacher Educators in Higher Education

As discussed earlier, PD is essential for improving the quality of teacher educators and, consequently, the quality of ELT in higher education. However, in Bangladesh, opportunities for continuous PD are often limited, particularly for teacher educators who work in more rural or resource-poor settings (Afroz et al., 2024; Khan, 2009; Wilson, 2021). Wilson (2021) notes that

many teacher educators in Bangladesh have little access to professional learning communities, workshops, or other forms of collaborative learning that are necessary for staying updated on new research and teaching methodologies.

This lack of PD is further compounded by a shortage of qualified mentors who can support novice teacher educators in their professional growth. Wilson (2021) highlights that many teacher educators have not been trained in mentoring or coaching, which limits their ability to guide trainee teachers effectively. To address these gaps, HEIs in Bangladesh must prioritize the PD of their teacher educators, ensuring that they have the knowledge and skills needed to mentor trainee teachers and improve ELT quality.

Faculty Retention in Bangladesh's Private Universities

The quality of ESL instruction in Bangladesh's higher-education sector faces several significant challenges, many of which are tied to broader issues within the private university system. One major issue is the poor compensation packages offered to ESL teachers (Kader & Salam, 2019; Khan et al., 2010). In leading private universities—those with structured governance systems, formal pay scales, and clear service rules—faculty receive comparatively higher compensation than public university teachers, which contributes to greater job satisfaction and dedication (Alam & Parvin, 2017; Kader & Salam, 2019). In contrast, newer or less-established private universities lack formal pay scales and service rules, resulting in low salaries and dissatisfaction among faculty (Kader & Salam, 2019; Moula et al., 2021). This dissatisfaction causes high turnover, with some teachers leaving mid-semester, which disrupts students' learning and hinders the delivery of quality education (Islam & Kaur, 2025; Kader & Salam, 2019). This dissatisfaction can lead to lower teaching quality, as teachers may not be fully invested in their work due to financial concerns.

Lack of TPD Opportunities for Rural ESL Teachers

In Bangladesh's rural areas, ELT faces significant obstacles, especially in terms of TPD and the quality of English instruction. The scarcity of qualified English teachers in rural regions is a pressing issue, as many teachers lack proper training in modern teaching methodologies such as CLT (Faisal & Ali, 2021; Rahman et al., 2018a). Additionally, those with some training face difficulties in applying their skills due to limited resources, outdated materials, and insufficient technology (e.g., multimedia tools), which hampers effective language instruction and student engagement. Another challenge is that TPD training programs often do not reach rural areas, leaving teachers outside of urban areas under-equipped to deal with the demands of modern pedagogical techniques (Rahman et al., 2018a). This challenge is compounded by the general underfunding of education in Bangladesh.

Further complicating the scenario, rural teachers often rely on traditional methods like the grammar-translation method (GTM), which emphasizes memorization over interactive and communicative skills (Faisal & Ali, 2021). The reliance on such outdated methods limits students' exposure to critical language skills, particularly in listening and speaking, which are essential for English proficiency. Moreover, classrooms are generally overcrowded, sometimes with over 100 students in a single class, making it challenging for teachers to address individual needs and effectively manage classes (Faisal & Ali, 2021).

The Role of TPD in Enhancing ESL Teaching Quality

Improving ESL instruction in Bangladeshi universities necessitates a focus on TPD. The need for English fluency among students in Bangladesh cannot currently be met, because there are notable gaps in teacher preparedness and instructional quality in the Bangladeshi ESL context. Enhancing TPD is crucial to ensuring that ESL teachers can meet international

standards, thus elevating the overall quality of higher education (Kabir, 2020; Wilson, 2021).

TPD can address gaps in teacher qualifications, pedagogical skills, and motivation, thereby elevating the standard of ESL education in universities.

Enhancing Teacher Qualifications and Competencies

One of the primary goals of TPD is to equip teachers with the necessary competencies and knowledge to effectively teach their subjects. In the context of ESL education, this involves training teachers in second-language acquisition theories, modern instructional techniques, and the use of technology in the classroom (Chowdhury & Kabir, 2014). According to Richards and Farrell (2005), effective ESL teachers need to understand how learners acquire a second language and how to implement strategies that facilitate this process in diverse classrooms. TPD programs that focus on these areas can help Bangladeshi ESL teachers improve their instructional practices and deliver more effective lessons.

In Bangladesh, where many ESL teachers are underqualified, TPD programs that offer certifications or advanced degrees in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) can help raise the overall standard of teaching (Ahmed, 2021; Rahman, 2021b). These programs provide teachers with a deeper understanding of linguistics, language-teaching methodologies, and classroom management strategies, all of which are essential for effective ESL education (Ahmed, 2021; Rahman, 2021b). In addition, continuous PD through workshops, conferences, and online courses can help teachers stay up to date with the latest research and best practices in ESL education.

Specifically, in Bangladeshi colleges, teachers are recruited through the Bangladesh Civil Service examination, which means many new teachers join without prior experience or training (Afroz et al., 2024). In this context, CPD can assist novice teachers in adapting to their roles. The

knowledge and experience of senior teachers can be shared informally through CPD, benefiting junior colleagues (DeWaard & Chavhan, 2022; Khan, 2009). According to DeWaard and Chavhan (2022), “Learning occurs when a boundary is crossed from unknown to known, or from novice to expert” (p. 62). By implementing robust TPD and CPD programs, Bangladesh can significantly improve the quality of ESL education, ensuring that novice and experienced teachers continue to grow professionally and contribute effectively to raising teaching standards nationwide.

Fostering Teacher Motivation and Job Satisfaction

Teacher motivation is another critical factor that relates to TPD and the success of ESL programs. Kader and Salam (2019) highlight that many teachers in private universities in Bangladesh are dissatisfied with their compensation and working conditions, leading to high turnover rates. TPD can help address this issue by providing teachers with opportunities for career advancement and professional growth, which can increase job satisfaction and reduce turnover. In addition to formal TPD programs, informal PD activities, such as peer observation, mentoring, and participation in professional learning communities, can also foster a sense of community and support among teachers (Richards & Farrell, 2005). These activities provide teachers with opportunities to collaborate with their peers, share best practices, and receive feedback on their teaching. Such collegial support systems can boost teacher morale and motivation, leading to improved teaching performance and student outcomes (Fullan et al., 2007).

Implementing Current Pedagogical Techniques

Another important aspect of TPD is training teachers in modern pedagogical techniques that promote active learning and student engagement. CLT is one such approach and has been

widely recognized for its effectiveness in language education. CLT focuses on teaching language through real-life communication and interaction (Hien, 2021) rather than rote memorization (Rahman et al., 2018a) of grammar rules and vocabulary.

In Bangladesh, where lecture-based teaching is still the norm, TPD programs that focus on CLT and other interactive teaching methods can help teachers create more engaging and effective ESL classrooms (Rahman et al., 2018b). For example, teachers can be trained to use task-based learning (TBL), where students complete meaningful tasks using the target language, or project-based learning, where students work on long-term projects that require them to use English in authentic contexts. These approaches not only improve language proficiency but also develop critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration skills, which are essential for success in the global workforce.

Technology and ESL Education

In the digital age, technology plays a crucial role in language learning. TPD programs that focus on integrating technology into ESL education can help teachers use digital tools to enhance their teaching and provide students with more opportunities for language practice (Al-Wasy, 2020; Amin, 2019). For example, teachers can be trained to use language learning apps, online resources, and multimedia tools to create interactive and engaging lessons. Technology can also facilitate personalized learning, where students can practice language skills at their own pace and receive immediate feedback. In Bangladesh, where access to technology may be limited in some regions, TPD programs can also focus on developing teachers' skills in using low-tech or no-tech solutions to enhance language learning. For example, teachers can be trained to use role-playing, storytelling, and other interactive activities that do not require advanced technology but still promote active language use (Al-Maashani & Mudhsh, 2023).

The Current Status of TPD for Higher-Education ESL Teachers in Bangladesh

The current state of ESL TPD in Bangladesh reflects a complex intersection of challenges and prospects. Younus (2023) identifies multiple barriers that prevent effective PD, including limited access to quality TPD programs, outdated resources, and a lack of institutional support. These challenges are worsened by ESL teachers' heavy workloads and limited training subsidies, which restrict their participation in PD activities. On the other hand, emerging prospects include government initiatives, international collaborations, and the growing integration of technology in PD programs (Rahman & Avan, 2016; Younus, 2023). The simultaneous presence of these obstacles and opportunities calls for a strategic rethinking of how PD initiatives are implemented to ensure they are accessible and impactful for ESL teachers.

Unfortunately, in-service PD programs often fail to address the specific needs of ESL teachers in higher education. Existing programs are generally designed for secondary school teachers, leaving university instructors without access to the specialized training they require (Ali & Hamid, 2022; Cross et al., 2022; Rahman, 2021b; Rahman et al., 2019a). Consequently, many ESL higher educators in Bangladesh struggle to implement effective language teaching practices that promote student engagement and language acquisition. This mismatch between the available training and the actual needs of teachers leads to stagnation in teaching innovation, further widening the gap between policy intentions and classroom realities. This disconnect between policy and practice is compounded by the lack of opportunities for teachers to engage in meaningful PD programs that focus on innovative teaching strategies. Addressing this disconnect requires not only reforming PD initiatives but also promoting a shift in pedagogical culture that values communicative competence over rote memorization.

While neoliberal reforms have influenced the overall integration of TPD in higher education, the challenges faced by ESL teachers and institutions in Bangladesh are particularly pronounced within the private higher-education sector, where market-driven priorities significantly affect the accessibility and quality of PD opportunities. The growth of private universities in Bangladesh has reshaped the educational landscape, but it has also created disparities in quality, both in education and PD (Kader & Salam, 2019). ESL teachers in these institutions face numerous obstacles in accessing TPD, which include financial limitations and the socio-political climate that influences the recruitment and retention of qualified staff (Kader & Salam, 2019). Moreover, institutions themselves struggle to implement effective TPD programs due to funding issues, lack of infrastructure, and a focus on profit margins over academic excellence (Kader & Salam, 2019). As pointed out by Ali and Walker (2014), despite efforts in the higher-education sector, such as the English Language Teaching Improvement Project (ELTIP), the outcomes have been “insignificant,” largely due to a lack of continuous teacher training and support (p. 34). Inadequate infrastructure and inconsistent access to PD resources have resulted in teachers reverting to traditional methods, such as the GTM, rather than adopting CLT approaches (Rahman & Pandian, 2018). This confluence of challenges and prospects calls for a comprehensive and context-sensitive approach to PD that can empower ESL teachers to bridge the gap between policy goals and classroom realities in Bangladesh’s higher-education system.

The Provision of TPD for Higher-Education ESL Teachers in Bangladesh: Challenges and Opportunities

This section will examine the barriers that teachers face in engaging with TPD, the opportunities that TPD initiatives offer, and the challenges institutions encounter in providing

meaningful TPD to their ESL teaching staff. This discussion is situated within the broader context of Bangladesh's neoliberal educational environment, drawing connections to the gaps in the literature on ESL TPD.

Lack of Continuous Professional Support

ESL teachers often lack continuous professional support following initial TPD sessions. According to Afroz et al. (2024), "In this context, CPDs in the higher education sector in Bangladesh are not widely used and the evidence of CPD practice among the teachers is rare and most of them are not motivated also" (p. 2). Hamid and Baldauf (2014) note that the failure of many initiatives, such as the CLT program, can be attributed to inadequate follow-up training and support for teachers after initial workshops. Many ESL teachers are left to their own devices after a single TPD session, making it difficult to sustain any meaningful change in classroom practice. Rahman and Pandian (2018) emphasize that without sustained PD and ongoing mentorship, teachers struggle to maintain the pedagogical shifts required by approaches like CLT.

Institutional, Workload, and Time Constraints

Teachers in Bangladesh also face institutional constraints that hinder their participation in TPD. The high teaching load, lack of time, and administrative responsibilities make it difficult for teachers to engage in ongoing PD activities (Ali, 2010). As highlighted by Rahman and Avan (2016), teachers in private universities in Bangladesh are often burdened with not only teaching responsibilities but also administrative and co-curricular duties, which leaves little time for PD activities. This issue is particularly acute in private universities, where faculty members are expected to contribute significantly to the administrative functioning of the institution, sometimes without appropriate compensation (Rahman & Avan, 2016).

The workload of university teachers in Bangladesh often exceeds 40 hours per week, with many faculty members having to balance multiple roles that detract from their ability to engage in meaningful PD. According to Rahman and Avan (2016), “As a whole, a teacher normally spends 40 to 48 hours in his/her workplace depending on the responsibilities he holds. However, this scenario varies from university to university” (p. 75). This is further complicated by the pressure to publish research and contribute to institutional goals such as technology implementation in teaching. The study by Rahman and Avan (2016) demonstrated a negative correlation between time spent on teaching and implementing new technologies, suggesting that teachers are often unable to incorporate innovative teaching methods due to their heavy workload.

Institutional and Policy Barriers

Institutional and policy barriers undermine the effectiveness and accessibility of TPD programs. Despite government initiatives aimed at enhancing teaching practices through the adoption of CLT at the national level, there is a considerable gap between policy objectives and actual classroom implementation (Rahman & Pandian, 2018). Teachers are often required to adopt new methodologies, such as CLT, without receiving adequate training or support, which adversely impacts their confidence and teaching effectiveness. Moreover, CLT’s role in improving language learning outcomes has been increasingly questioned, as ongoing efforts by policymakers and curriculum developers have not yet bridged the gap between intended outcomes and practical results (Ali & Walker, 2014; Rahman, 2015; Rahman & Pandian, 2018). Adding to these challenges, bureaucratic hurdles within educational institutions further restrict teachers’ engagement in TPD, as bureaucratic inefficiencies lead to delays, miscommunication, and limited responsiveness to faculty needs (Khan et al., 2010; Nur & Short, 2019). The

combined impacts of these policy misalignments and bureaucratic constraints significantly hinder the professional growth of ESL teachers, thereby limiting the potential improvements in language education quality across Bangladesh.

Resistance to Change

Another significant challenge is the resistance to change among teachers. Many ESL teachers in Bangladesh have been trained in traditional methods such as the GTM and find it difficult to transition to more modern, communicative approaches. The top-down approach of curriculum reform, as mentioned by Ali and Walker (2014), often leads to a disconnect between policy and practice, where teachers feel that their needs and contexts are not taken into consideration. This resistance can be attributed to a lack of clarity in the curriculum, insufficient training, and the absence of ongoing support (Rahman et al., 2018a).

Resource and Funding Challenges in Private Universities

Due to resource and funding limitations, private universities in Bangladesh encounter significant challenges in offering effective TPD. Many teachers report inadequate opportunities and incentives for PD, with cost-cutting measures in the private sector frequently restricting the availability of such programs (Rahman & Avan, 2016). One of the most pressing challenges is the lack of funding and resources, which inhibits institutions from providing essential resources such as high-quality training materials, expert facilitators, and necessary technology, all critical for effective TPD. Many private universities allocate insufficient funds to PD programs, limiting meaningful TPD opportunities (Khan et al., 2010; Rahman, 2020; Rahman & Avan, 2016). Rahman and Avan (2016) found that while some private universities offer PD opportunities, these are often insufficient and do not address the specific needs of ESL teachers.

Human-Resource Challenges and High Turnover in Private Universities

Another significant institutional challenge is the inefficiency of human-resource practices. As highlighted by Khan et al. (2010), private universities in Bangladesh often have inadequate human-resource policies, particularly concerning rewards, recognition, and promotion for faculty members. This lack of institutional support demotivates teachers from participating in TPD, as they perceive that their efforts will not be appropriately rewarded. Additionally, institutions often face high faculty turnover rates, which create instability within the teaching staff (Barua & Uddin, 2016). Private universities in Bangladesh face challenges in implementing long-term TPD programs due to systemic issues such as inconsistent trainee selection, inadequate monitoring mechanisms, limited logistical support, and a lack of needs-based training design (Khan et al., 2010; Nur & Short, 2019). This high turnover not only disrupts the continuity of TPD initiatives but also diminishes the institutional knowledge base, as experienced teachers leave and take their expertise with them.

Further, the neoliberal focus on market-driven education in Bangladesh has led to a deprioritization of PD in favor of more immediate, revenue-generating activities such as increasing student enrollment and offering marketable programs (Ahmed, 2016). This shift in priorities has created a challenging environment for ESL teachers who wish to improve their teaching practices through TPD but find little institutional support to do so.

Lack of Scholarly Resources and Opportunities for Teacher Research

A significant challenge hindering effective ESL instruction is the lack of access to scholarly and professional publications, free online resources, and technology, which many teachers cite as a barrier to professional growth and instructional innovation (Hossen, 2023; Huq & Huque, 2014; Shohel et al., 2022). Many private universities do not provide adequate research

facilities, which limits teachers' ability to engage in teacher research and reflective practice, or to innovate and trial new teaching methods (Ahmed, 2016; Khan et al., 2010). Without opportunities for pedagogical research, ESL teachers are less likely to stay updated on the latest developments in language education, which affects the quality of instruction they provide.

Shortage of Qualified Trainers and Organizational Inertia in TPD Implementation

A significant challenge in implementing effective TPD in Bangladesh is the shortage of qualified trainers who can competently deliver these programs. Although donor-funded initiatives, such as the ELTIP, have attempted to fill this gap, the quality of training remains inconsistent. Many trainers lack the necessary pedagogical expertise in modern ESL methodologies, which limits the programs' effectiveness (Hamid, 2010). Adding to this challenge is the resistance within institutions themselves to adopt the changes necessary for successful TPD. Organizational inertia, combined with vague policy directives, often leads to only superficial efforts in PD. As noted by Chowdhury and Kabir (2014), institutional leaders frequently hesitate to implement innovative approaches due to concerns about potential failures or disruptions to existing systems. This resistance not only hampers the establishment of comprehensive and sustainable TPD initiatives but also undermines progress in enhancing teacher quality.

Improving Teacher Performance

Despite the constraints, institutions that make a concerted effort to implement and support TPD initiatives stand to gain significantly in terms of educational quality and institutional reputation. According to Poudel (2024), "Teacher professional development (TPD) is recognized as an important component in fostering quality education and driving educational reform" (p. 1). One of the most important benefits of TPD for institutions is the improvement in

teacher performance, which directly impacts student learning outcomes. According to Chowdhury and Roshid (2021), “English language teachers’ professional development and professional identity construction is considered as a crucial issue for teachers’ professional performance” (p. 313). Studies have shown that teachers who participate in regular, high-quality PD are more likely to adopt innovative teaching practices, engage students more effectively, and improve student achievement (Sultana, 2018).

Programs such as English in Action (EIA) in Bangladesh exemplify the transformative impact of TPD on ESL instruction. Rahman et al. (2019a) found that such initiatives enhance teaching practices by aligning them with students’ communicative needs and global pedagogical standards. Moreover, the integration of globally informed TPD initiatives contributes to institutional competitiveness through improved international recognition and collaboration (Rahman & Pandian, 2018). Ultimately, prioritizing ESL teacher development not only equips educators to meet evolving classroom demands but also reinforces student success and institutional excellence in an increasingly interconnected educational landscape.

Professionalization of Teaching Staff

TPD programs play a key role in professionalizing the teaching staff by fostering an environment where teaching is respected and valued. This approach not only boosts teacher morale but also attracts highly qualified individuals to the profession, enhancing their institution’s culture. Anwaruddin (2013) highlights that development programs focusing on teacher identity and cognition are essential for long-term success. Supporting teachers’ growth promotes job satisfaction, retention, and a positive learning environment, contributing to a stable, high-quality workforce. Engaging in TPD offers ESL teachers opportunities for professional growth and career advancement. Teachers who invest in their PD are more likely to be promoted

to leadership positions within their institutions. In a highly competitive job market, the skills acquired through TPD programs can provide teachers with a distinct advantage.

Networking and Collaboration

TPD initiatives facilitate networking and collaboration among teachers. By participating in workshops, seminars, and training sessions, ESL teachers can connect with their peers, share best practices, and collaborate on innovative teaching projects. This sense of community helps reduce the isolation that many teachers, particularly those in rural areas, often experience. According to Power et al. (2012), collaborative learning environments foster a culture of continuous improvement, where teachers can support each other in overcoming challenges and implementing new teaching strategies.

Enhancing Faculty Retention and Institutional Reputation

TPD initiatives improve faculty retention by fostering a sense of value and support for teachers' professional growth (Afroz et al., 2024; Khan et al., 2010; Raqib et al., 2023). This is crucial in Bangladesh's higher-education sector, where retaining skilled educators is challenging. Furthermore, TPD can help institutions enhance their reputation. Private universities in Bangladesh are increasingly focused on improving their academic standing both locally and internationally (Huq & Huque, 2014; Khan et al., 2010). By investing in faculty development, institutions can demonstrate their commitment to quality education, which can attract more students and improve their competitiveness in the higher-education market.

TPD: Promising Practices

In higher education in Bangladesh, numerous initiatives have been launched over the years related to TPD, particularly in ELT. These efforts aim to enhance both pedagogical skills and language proficiency, thereby equipping teachers to foster better learning outcomes among

students. While some initiatives have demonstrated success, many have faced challenges due to factors such as resource constraints, insufficient training support, and a lack of long-term sustainability (Ali & Hamid, 2021; Barua & Uddin, 2016; Kader & Salam, 2019). Although Bangladesh has seen considerable TPD efforts at the primary and secondary levels, similar initiatives in higher education remain relatively limited (Ali & Hamid, 2021; Choi & Lee, 2007; Cross et al., 2022; Donohue et al., 2012; Khan, 2009; Rahman, 2021b; Rahman et al., 2019a).

This section explores TPD initiatives aimed at improving English language proficiency in both secondary and higher education, providing an in-depth analysis of their key components, assessing their outcomes, and identifying factors contributing to their successes or failures. Moreover, the review highlights TPD programs in higher education, addressing the challenges encountered while examining promising practices from secondary education that could inform future efforts in higher education. Through this analysis, the section offers insights into what has worked and what still needs to be addressed to foster effective PD within Bangladesh's higher-education system.

PD Initiatives in Bangladesh

For the past three decades, Bangladesh has seen several initiatives aimed at improving the quality of English teaching in both K–12 schools and universities (Donohue et al., 2012; Hamid & Al Amin, 2022). These programs, often funded and designed in collaboration with international agencies (Chowdhury & Erling, 2021; Donohue et al., 2012; Nur & Islam, 2018), have sought to address the persistent gap in English language proficiency among teachers and students. One significant initiative was the English Language Teaching Improvement Project (ELTIP), funded by the UK government between 1997 and 2002 (Ali & Hamid, 2022; Donohue et al., 2012; Farooqui, 2021). This project aimed to train approximately 11,000 secondary school

teachers in ELT, marking a large-scale effort to uplift language teaching standards in Bangladesh's secondary education sector (Donohue et al., 2012; Rahman, 2021b). In parallel, the Bangladesh Ministry of Education initiated a curriculum reform project, producing a series of communicative English coursebooks called *English for Today*, aimed at secondary and intermediate students (Donohue et al., 2012). While this effort was intended to embrace the communicative approach, Rahman (2009, as cited in Donohue et al., 2012) highlights that the realities on the ground necessitated a compromise model, as a full implementation of the communicative approach was not feasible in the existing educational infrastructure.

Another transformative program was the English in Action (EIA) project, launched in collaboration between the UK and Bangladeshi governments in 2008 and initiated by the Ministry of Education in 2009, which ran until its conclusion in 2017 (Donohue et al., 2012; Farooqui, 2021; Rahman, 2021b). The project aimed to reach an audience of 25 million individuals, including primary and secondary school teachers and students, as well as adult learners (Rahman, 2021b). Its primary objective was to support Bangladesh's economic development by equipping learners with English language skills to improve their access to the global economy (Rahman, 2021b). EIA sought to extend communicative ELT training across the entire primary and secondary education spectrum. What set this initiative apart was its use of mass educational strategies, leveraging mobile technology and television broadcasting to reach a wider audience of teachers and adult learners (Ali & Hamid, 2022; Donohue et al., 2012). The involvement of the Open University UK as a key international partner underscored the global reach of this program, reflecting its innovative approach to delivering TPD using cutting-edge technology (Donohue et al., 2012). The EIA project reflects a growing recognition of the need

for structured professional development in the country, albeit at the primary and secondary levels (Donohue et al., 2012; Rahman, 2021b).

TPD efforts in the university sector, particularly through the British Council's English for Specific Purposes (ESP) project between 1979 and 1981, experienced less success (Donohue et al., 2012). The project focused on training 20 teachers to specialize in ESP, an approach to language instruction that tailors English teaching to the specific academic, professional, or occupational needs of learners (Donohue et al., 2012; Hyland, 2022; Mao & Zhou, 2024; Shalash, 2024). However, after completing nine months of training, all the teachers took up employment opportunities in the Middle East and Africa, leaving the project unable to retain local expertise (Donohue et al., 2012). Additionally, although ESP coursebooks were developed, they were not widely adopted by universities, which limited the project's impact on higher-education English language instruction (Rahman et al., 1981, as cited in Donohue et al., 2012).

The 1995 decision by the government to make English a compulsory subject in all universities presented further challenges for the field of TPD (Donohue et al., 2012). A British Council study (Raynor, 1995, as cited in Donohue et al., 2012) examined the feasibility of this mandate, proposing that it would take approximately 600 hours of English language instruction to bridge the gap between secondary graduates' English proficiency and the level required for university study. This amount of instruction far exceeded what could realistically be covered within the compulsory courses. The study also emphasized the severe shortage of trained ESL teachers and suitable teaching materials (Donohue et al., 2012). Although there has been some increase in the number of trained ELT professionals since then, as noted by Karim and Zaman (2006), a significant deficit remains, exacerbating the challenge of ensuring high-quality English language instruction in higher education.

Another significant initiative in TPD in Bangladesh was the Transforming English Language Skills in Higher Education (TELSHEB) project, aimed at improving the English language proficiency of both students and educators (British Council Bangladesh, 2024; Donohue et al., 2012). In partnership with the British Council Bangladesh and the UGC, the project developed four modules: English for Academic Purposes 1 (EAP 1), English for Academic Purposes 2 (EAP 2), English for Employability (EfE), and Professional Development (PD). The original plan was to implement the first three modules as standardized English course materials for students in HEIs in Bangladesh, starting in January 2015, while the PD module was intended for faculty PD. The PD module included the Master Trainer Programs (Donohue et al., 2012). These programs aimed to prepare selected faculty as master trainers, thereby linking faculty development to the broader curricular reform envisaged by the other three modules (Donohue et al., 2012). A needs analysis conducted as part of the project identified essential areas for improvement, particularly in enhancing teaching methods and better integrating English into the curriculum. A key feature of the initiative was the PD module, which aimed to bridge the gap between English language skills and subject-specific instruction (Donohue et al., 2012). These modules were piloted at selected universities, and the finalized versions were submitted to the UGC for implementation across all universities in Bangladesh. Despite strong recommendations for the inclusion of these modules in future curricula, akin to the ESP project, they have yet to be adopted by universities for reasons that remain unclear.

The Higher Education Quality Enhancement Project (HEQEP) (2009–2018) aimed to modernize Bangladesh's higher-education sector to align with the global economy (Ali & Hamid, 2021). With a budget of \$91.50 million, this initiative was rooted in Human Capital Theory (HCT), emphasizing that education should equip individuals with skills to enhance

economic productivity (Ali & Hamid, 2021; Hamid & Rahman, 2019). Universities were encouraged to adopt outcome-based education (OBE), focusing on skill development and learning outcomes aligned with global job market needs (Anwaruddin, 2013). This approach required educators to revise their pedagogical methods to include objectives addressing these learning outcomes. A notable example of this shift is BRAC University's residential semester program, where undergraduates focus on English proficiency and soft skills such as communication and teamwork, reflecting the response to neoliberal market demands in Bangladesh (Hamid & Baldauf, 2014). As noted by Hamid and Baldauf (2014), the forces of an "open market economy" play a central role in shaping higher education (p. 202). Teachers were required to transition from traditional methods to more communicative, learner-centered approaches, necessitating substantial investment in TPD to support this shift (Naik, 2018).

Insights Gained from Examining TPD Initiatives in Bangladesh

Reports on TPD initiatives in Bangladesh's education sector provide valuable insights into the strengths and shortcomings of these efforts. Programs like ELTIP and EIA demonstrate the potential of large-scale, internationally supported projects to drive improvements in teaching practices, particularly through innovative technologies and collaborative approaches (Ali & Hamid, 2021; Ali et al., 2023; Rahman, 2021a; Rahman, 2021b). These initiatives have significantly enhanced the pedagogical competencies of many teachers, contributing to better student learning outcomes. For example, the integration of mobile technology in EIA represents a scalable and flexible approach for future PD efforts, which can help address the geographic and infrastructural challenges of the country. Beginning in 1998, the ELTIP trained nearly 35,000 secondary school teachers across the nation, significantly contributing to their PD through meticulously designed training programs (Rahman, 2021b).

The ESP project failed to retain trained professionals, which highlights the issue of skilled worker migration, where talented individuals leave the country for better opportunities, causing local institutions to lose valuable expertise (R. Ahmed, 2025; Mortuza, 2021). Additionally, the findings of a British Council study in 1995 emphasized a significant gap between policy ambitions and practical realities, marked by limited professional capacity within the ESL teaching profession and insufficient instructional resources, which have continued to plague TPD efforts in Bangladesh (Donohue et al., 2012). These disparities, alongside the challenges in retaining qualified professionals and bridging policy-practice gaps, underscore the broader systemic obstacles facing language education and TPD in Bangladesh.

As previously mentioned, one of the most prominent TPD initiatives was the Transforming English Language Skills in Higher Education (TELSHEB) project, which focused on improving teaching practices in higher education, particularly in English-medium instruction (British Council Bangladesh, 2024; Donohue et al., 2012). This project emphasized pedagogical development rather than merely enhancing language proficiency, recognizing the complex challenges of teaching in Bangladesh. The project introduced several key components to address these challenges.

First, the PD module fostered reflective teaching practices and collaboration among English and subject lecturers. Using audiovisual materials and open educational resources, the project fostered participatory classrooms and encouraged facilitative teaching approaches (British Council Bangladesh, 2024; Donohue et al., 2012). Second, the Master Trainer Programs employed a cascading model, where master trainers disseminated knowledge and skills acquired during workshops to their colleagues. This approach was particularly effective in resource-limited institutions, as it extended the reach of PD programs (Donohue et al., 2012). However,

the success of the cascading model was not universal. Some trainers struggled to transition from the role of participant to trainer, and inconsistencies in the quality of training emerged, particularly in institutions lacking adequate resources and support for trainers. The project also tailored its modules to fit the diverse contexts of different universities, accommodating variations in class sizes, resources, and student proficiency levels. This flexibility was essential in addressing the specific needs of different institutions, contributing to the initiative's success in some contexts.

Despite these positive outcomes, the TELSHEB initiative faced several challenges. Many educators reported resistance to new teaching methods, particularly in public universities where resources were limited. Further, concerns about the long-term sustainability of the program emerged, as many institutions lacked the resources and institutional commitment to maintain the changes introduced by the project (Rahman, 2021b). The absence of sustained institutional support remained one of the key barriers to the full implementation of this TPD program in Bangladesh. Without dedicated time, resources, and incentives for faculty to participate in PD activities, the impact of these initiatives remained limited.

The hierarchical nature of many educational institutions also posed a challenge. Junior faculty members, who were often more open to adopting new methods within their wider pursuit of PD, lacked the authority to implement these changes on a broader scale without the support of senior faculty and administrators (Gogoi & Vaičekuskaitė, 2025; Islam et al., 2025; Raqib, 2019). As a result, reforms introduced through TPD programs often remained isolated, with little impact on the overall teaching and learning culture within institutions.

To overcome these challenges, future TPD initiatives must focus on building strong institutional partnerships. This includes securing commitments from university administrators to

provide the necessary resources and support for PD activities. Integrating PD into the broader institutional framework is essential for ensuring long-term sustainability. Creating incentives for faculty participation, such as career advancement opportunities or recognition for PD achievements, can also help to increase engagement and ensure the success of these initiatives.

Despite the promising practices introduced by initiatives like HEQEP and TELSHEB, several challenges hindered their broader success. A shortage of qualified trainers and facilitators, particularly in rural and less-established institutions, limited the effectiveness of these programs (Hamid & Rahman, 2019). Resistance to change among long-serving educators, coupled with insufficient incentives to participate in PD programs, further hampered progress (Naik, 2018). Additionally, the inconsistency in the quality of TPD programs was a critical issue. Institutions with greater resources, such as BRAC University, were able to implement robust PD programs, while many public universities struggled to offer comparable opportunities. This uneven distribution of resources across the higher-education sector meant that the impact of these initiatives was not felt uniformly (Sultana, 2018).

In conclusion, while TPD initiatives in Bangladesh have introduced promising practices, long-term success depends on addressing challenges related to resource constraints, institutional resistance, and the need for sustained engagement. Building strong partnerships with institutions, securing administrative support, and creating incentives for faculty participation are key to ensuring the sustainability and broader impact of TPD programs in Bangladesh.

Gaps in the Literature on TPD of ESL Teachers in Bangladesh

The literature review identifies critical gaps in the TPD of ESL teachers in Bangladesh, particularly within the framework of neoliberal policies and across diverse educational institutions. The identified gaps that my study aimed to address include:

- **Institutional Variability in TPD:** The literature underscores a gap in understanding how neoliberal influences distinctly impact TPD opportunities in public versus private institutions. Private universities often prioritize profit over quality in TPD due to market-driven policies, while public institutions face bureaucratic and funding limitations, negatively affecting PD quality. Exploring these contrasts helps identify how different institutional contexts affect ESL teachers' professional growth and instructional effectiveness.
- **Tailored TPD for ESL Teacher Preparedness and Retention:** There is a significant shortage of structured, relevant PD opportunities that align with modern pedagogical needs, such as the need for CLT. The literature suggests that current PD options in higher education in Bangladesh are insufficient for equipping ESL educators with contemporary teaching methodologies.
- **Institutional Support and PD Effectiveness:** Lastly, the literature points out the varying levels of institutional support for PD across universities in Bangladesh. There is a need to study how institutional support—through funding, policies, and administrative backing—affects PD effectiveness in enhancing ESL teaching quality. This aspect of my research addresses this need by gathering ESL teachers' perspectives on and insights into how institutional endorsement influences PD outcomes and ESL teaching standards. However, existing studies have given limited attention to the impact of rural-urban institutional disparities, especially regarding access to technology, mentorship, and collaborative learning communities, which are crucial for equitable TPD provision.

In summary, my study aimed to contribute to filling critical gaps by examining the impacts of neoliberal policies on TPD for ESL teachers across different institutional settings,

exploring ESL teachers' perspectives on PD strategies to align PD with their contemporary needs, and identifying effective support mechanisms for ESL teacher development in Bangladesh's public and private higher-education institutions. Moreover, this research aims to address the absence of empirical, practice-based, and context-sensitive approaches of TPD—especially those that integrate collaborative approaches, professional identity formation, and digital pedagogical strategies.

Conclusion

This chapter has critically examined the literature on the neoliberal restructuring of ELT in Bangladeshi higher education, highlighting key shifts in policy, pedagogy, and institutional practices. The review outlined how neoliberal logics have influenced ELT provision in both public and private universities, often privileging marketable competencies over holistic educational development. It also explored the implications of managerialism, massification, and commodification for ELT practitioners, particularly about TPD. The chapter has illuminated persistent systemic inequities—especially in ITE and in-service opportunities—that disproportionately affect educators based on institutional type and geographic location. The following chapter presents the research design and methodology employed in this qualitative study, which explores university ESL teachers' experiences with PD in neoliberal Bangladeshi higher education.

Chapter 4: Research Design and Methodology

Introduction

This qualitative study was conducted to examine the perceptions, needs, and contextual influences shaping professional development (PD) for ESL teachers in Bangladeshi universities. This chapter begins by revisiting the problem addressed in this study, as well as the challenges and gaps in the literature that the investigation aims to rectify. The intent with this opening section is to set the stage for the purpose of research, objectives, and questions, which were outlined in the first chapter (see pp. 9–12), and the methodology.

Statement of the Problem

The importance of effective English language education in Bangladesh has grown substantially, particularly within university settings, where English courses are compulsory for undergraduate and graduate students. However, many university students in Bangladesh continue to exhibit poor performance in English, which hinders their ability to secure better employment opportunities domestically and pursue educational or immigration pathways abroad (Ali & Hamid, 2022; Roshid & Chowdhury, 2013). Despite the critical role of English proficiency in socio-economic advancement, studies suggest that Bangladeshi graduates frequently struggle with effective communication skills in English (Ali et al., 2023; Donohue et al., 2012; Haider & Chowdhury, 2012).

The research investigated the underlying causes of English language underperformance in Bangladeshi universities, particularly focusing on the inadequate quality of language instruction in higher education as a key factor contributing to students' limited proficiency. Although student-related factors such as low motivation and the pressures of English-medium learning are relevant and appear in prior studies (Alavinia & Sehat, 2012; Çankaya, 2017; Donohue et al.,

2012; Pun & Thomas, 2020; Sultana, 2014), this study contends that teacher-related factors are more pivotal. One prominent issue highlighted in the literature is the insufficient availability of pre-service and in-service training opportunities for English language teachers (Ahmed, 2021; Ahsan et al., 2011; Das, 2021; Donohue et al., 2012; Raqib, 2019). As Das (2021) states, “It is proven here that lack of training is a huge barrier to ensuring quality education in Bangladesh” (p. 295). This lack of comprehensive training deprives teachers of the competencies and knowledge essential for professional growth, career progression, and effective teaching.

The need for improved teacher training is particularly pressing given that communicative approaches, specifically communicative language teaching (CLT), have been emphasized in English language teaching (ELT) across South Asia for over three decades to foster students’ communicative competence (Shrestha, 2013; Sultana et al., 2022). Yet Bangladeshi teachers often encounter challenges in implementing CLT due to limited institutional support and inadequate PD. Additionally, there is evidence that Bangladeshi universities are not consistently providing the necessary support to enhance the teaching quality of their English language faculty (Ahmed, 2021; Ahsan et al., 2011; Barua & Uddin, 2021; Das, 2021; Donohue et al., 2012). For teachers to effectively support students’ language acquisition, it is crucial for universities to invest in ongoing training and development programs that empower their instructors with updated methodologies and tools.

This research addressed a gap in the literature related to understanding the needs for and barriers to PD for English language teachers within the neoliberal context of Bangladeshi higher education. While there is a substantial body of work on the challenges students face in learning English, less attention has been given to the institutional and professional barriers that teachers encounter in higher education, which ultimately affect student outcomes (Eroglu & Kaya, 2021;

Kader & Salam, 2019; Khan et al., 2021b; Li, 2025; Rahman, 2021a; Rahman, 2021b; Wilson, 2021; Younus, 2023). Therefore, this study focused on identifying the factors that impede effective PD for English language teachers in Bangladesh, with the goal of proposing improvements to training approaches and support systems within universities. By addressing these deficiencies, this research sought to contribute to the literature on teacher development in ESL contexts and provide practical insights for university administrators and policymakers on enhancing teacher preparedness and, consequently, student language proficiency.

The Research Setting

This research study utilized internet-mediated research (IMR), specifically Zoom, a virtual digital platform, to conduct interviews with ESL teachers and students in Bangladesh from Canada. IMR was chosen due to its ability to overcome geographical barriers and pandemic-imposed restrictions, enabling effective remote data generation (Hewson, 2014). Data collection took place from June 2021 to January 2022, a time frame during the pandemic, which meant limited physical interaction, underscoring the importance of using virtual online interviews. According to Manchia et al. (2022), in 2020, many hoped the COVID-19 pandemic would end by 2021, allowing life to return to normal. However, new and more contagious variants prolonged the pandemic, driving up global infection rates and resulting in stricter social restrictions and additional lockdowns.

Using Zoom enabled real-time interaction, allowing the observation of verbal and non-verbal facial cues in one-on-one face-to-face individual and focus-group interviews while ensuring accessibility for participants from diverse regions of Bangladesh, including those who might not have been able to participate in a traditional, on-location study. Conducting interviews online provided methodological flexibility, logistical feasibility, and accessibility to participants

living distant from one another. This approach is supported by Archibald et al. (2019), who highlighted that platforms like Zoom significantly enhance reach and adaptability, making research accessible to participants spread across various locations. Therefore, Zoom was instrumental in enabling the research process to continue during the pandemic, making remote qualitative data generation feasible and effective.

While the use of Zoom can present challenges for participants from public universities due to unequal access to digital infrastructure, that issue was not evident in this study. Previous research shows that students in public universities in Bangladesh—especially those from rural areas—often face poor internet connectivity, high data costs, and limited access to digital devices, all of which hinder their participation in online platforms like Zoom (Ahsan et al., 2023; Alom et al., 2023; Badiuzzaman et al., 2021; Shohel et al., 2025). However, both the public and private universities selected for this study are situated in Dhaka, the capital city, where students and faculty had access to reliable internet and digital resources. Therefore, participants did not experience major technological barriers during Zoom-based interviews.

Online interviewing presented significant opportunities, including enhanced accessibility and methodological flexibility. By enabling participation from geographically dispersed individuals, Zoom expanded the research reach, including to hard-to-access populations, and allowed the integration of diverse perspectives (Hewson, 2014). The platform's security features ensured ethical compliance, such as maintaining confidentiality and securely recording sessions without third-party involvement (Archibald et al., 2019). Additionally, digital interviews facilitated efficient data recording, transcription, and analysis (Webb, 2017).

However, challenges were inherent in this approach. Connectivity issues occasionally disrupted interviews, at times affecting data quality and participant focus (Archibald et al.,

2019). Variations in some participants' digital literacy and familiarity with Zoom impacted their comfort and engagement, influencing the richness of the data collected (Hewson, 2014). Further, despite the ability to observe non-verbal cues, some subtleties of face-to-face interaction, such as nuanced body language and contextual depth, may have been diminished in the digital medium (Lobe et al., 2022). Ethical and practical adjustments, including ensuring equitable access and clear communication of expectations, were crucial to address these limitations effectively (Hewson, 2014; Webb, 2017). Overall, this study's online, digital setting allowed for an effective approach to qualitative data collection, considering distance and pandemic restrictions.

Justification for a Qualitative Methodology

The qualitative methodology chosen for this study is rooted in interpretivist and constructivist paradigms, aimed at gathering in-depth insights into the lived experiences of ESL teachers and students within Bangladeshi HEIs. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), "The researcher's intent, then, is to make sense of (or interpret) the meanings others have about the world. This is why qualitative research is often called interpretive research" (p. 24). Moreover, this methodology aligns with the constructivist belief that knowledge is subjective and co-constructed through social interactions, making it ideal for exploring the diverse, contextualized experiences of individuals (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Furthermore, this approach aligns closely with phenomenology, a branch of qualitative research that focuses on exploring and synthesizing the subjective meanings and experiences of individuals, making it particularly suited for research questions that seek to understand nuanced perspectives (Saldaña, 2011).

The interpretive, constructivist paradigm prioritizes understanding the meanings that individuals assign to their experiences and the ways they interpret these experiences within a given context. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), "Constructivist researchers often address

the ‘processes’ of interaction among individuals. They also focus on the specific contexts in which people live and work to understand the historical and cultural settings of the participants” (p. 24). This approach aligns with the present research because it allows the researcher to explore ESL teachers’ perspectives on PD and contextual factors that influence their professional growth in Bangladeshi universities. By engaging in virtual qualitative research interviews, this study embraces the flexibility and participant-centered focus of qualitative inquiry, ensuring that the voices of educators and students are authentically represented.

In a constructivist and interpretive qualitative framework, researchers work closely with participants to co-construct meanings rather than imposing predefined categories or hypotheses. This aligns well with the research focus on ESL teachers’ and students’ experiences, since constructivism emphasizes understanding participants’ unique perspectives as shaped by their personal and cultural contexts (Kadyschuk, 2023). By employing this framework, the researcher facilitated a research environment where participants’ insights were validated and central to the findings, respecting the idea that everyone’s experience of a phenomenon is unique and essential to the research process (Kadyschuk, 2023).

In this study, the researcher’s role was to facilitate the identification of meaningful themes inductively from the data, as opposed to imposing predefined categories or frameworks. This role aligns with the constructivist approach in which the researcher makes decisions about the categories throughout the study and recognizes that everyone’s experience may require unique interpretative considerations (Charmaz, 1990; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Naeem et al., 2023; Tanlaka & Aryal, 2025). The researcher’s engagement with the data during the virtual interviews became essential to ensuring that the findings were grounded in participants’ authentic perspectives.

Relevance of Phenomenology to Research Questions

The phenomenological approach was particularly well-suited to addressing the research questions guiding this study, as these inquiries necessitate an understanding of people's perspectives, contextual factors, and personal experiences. By investigating ESL teachers' perceptions about the opportunities and challenges of PD initiatives, along with their beliefs regarding effective PD in Bangladeshi universities, this approach enabled an examination of the personal and cultural dynamics that influenced teachers' professional growth. The chosen methodology was especially fitting for addressing questions related to the following areas:

1. Teachers' Perceptions of PD and Training: To comprehend how educators perceived PD initiatives in Bangladeshi universities, it was essential to tap into their subjective experiences and beliefs, along with the challenges they encountered.
2. PD Needs: By probing what teachers believed they needed to improve their practice, this approach emphasized the subjective needs that might have differed from institutional expectations or standardized approaches of PD. This approach allows for open-ended responses that reveal unanticipated aspects of teachers' needs.
3. Students' Perspectives of ELT: From the students' viewpoints, phenomenological-style interviewing captured how they experienced language instruction and how it influenced their academic journey. Their perspectives were shaped by personal, cultural, and institutional factors, which phenomenological research held the potential to reveal.
4. The Influence of Context and Beliefs on PD Programs: Teachers' unique backgrounds and beliefs about language teaching were fundamental to understanding how PD programs could be tailored to meet contextual needs. This approach gave voice to

individual teachers' stories, capturing how their environments shaped their educational philosophies.

5. PD Initiatives and Teacher Participation: Phenomenological methods allowed teachers to share their experiences about participation in PD activities, emphasizing why certain initiatives resonated with them.

Theoretical Framework

In my study, I adopted phenomenology and constructivism as the theoretical framework for my research methodology. Phenomenology is particularly well-suited to studies that seek to uncover the underlying consciousness and meaning behind participants' thoughts and actions (Ndamé, 2023). It provides a robust structure for capturing the essence of shared lived experiences among ESL teachers, which is essential for understanding the nuanced impacts of PD within the unique socio-economic and educational landscape of Bangladesh (Privitera & Ahlgrim-Delzell, 2018).

This methodological approach was especially effective when using in-depth, semi-structured interviews, a method I employed to elicit comprehensive, first-person accounts of participants' professional experiences and development journeys. According to Ndamé (2023), "This method is used in research involving in-depth semi-structured interviews, documentary studies, and participant/observer case studies common with ethnography" (p. 379). Through these interviews, participants articulated their experiences directly, allowing for a deeper exploration of their personal and professional lives, as well as the influences of broader neoliberal dynamics on their teaching practices and growth. According to Privitera and Ahlgrim-Delzell (2019), "Phenomenology is used to describe first-person accounts of conscious experiences" (p. 411).

Following phenomenological methodology, I constructed a trustworthy narrative based on these first-person accounts, capturing the authentic experiences and insights shared by the participants. This narrative drew from primary data obtained through in-depth interviews. These techniques allowed for a comprehensive portrayal of ESL teachers' PD experiences within Bangladeshi higher education, particularly under the influence of neoliberal policies and frameworks. The study further illustrated students' perspectives on English language teaching and learning in the context of Bangladesh. In addition, phenomenology served as an authentic approach to capturing the realities that participants encountered in their lives. Through its focus on self-description by participants, this methodology enabled researchers to gain insight into individuals' lived experiences. Typically, the narrative was derived directly from participants' first-person accounts, which enhanced the credibility of this approach (Ndame, 2023). Additionally, phenomenology incorporates essential elements, such as conscious experience, objects of awareness, and the content of self-description, to support researchers in developing a reliable narrative (Privitera & Ahlgrim-Delzell, 2018). Participants often engaged within shared contexts, which allowed for the expression of both subjective and objective experiences, fostering intersubjectivity within the research process.

Constructivism serves as a complementary theoretical perspective alongside phenomenology. Constructivism is deeply rooted in the ideas of Dewey and Vygotsky, both of whom proposed that learners construct their own meanings and understandings within the academic or professional field in which they are engaged (Adams et al., 2012). This theoretical perspective is particularly significant in qualitative research. When applied to qualitative research, constructivist theory examines how people interpret their experiences and perspectives. The researcher then uses these interpretations to develop a deeper understanding of the topic

under study. Although constructivism is a learning theory, I applied it to perform my research here. In recent years, qualitative inquiry has been labeled as social constructivist, implying an approach to research that supports the multiple views and perspectives elicited from participants (Billups, 2021). Furthermore, the theoretical and practical perspectives of constructivism offer experiences through which student teachers can begin to shape their own visions of meaningful learning and teaching. That is why this model holds powerful implications for a teacher-education curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment (Adams et al., 2012).

The concept of constructivism is based on the belief that knowledge is socially constructed, and its origin lies in the social practices and contexts in which people participate (Nguyen, 2019). Social or Vygotskian constructivism emphasizes education for social transformation and reflects a theory of human development that situates the individual within a socio-cultural context (Nguyen, 2019). Individuals construct knowledge in transaction with the environment, and in the process both the individual and the environment are changed.

For this theoretical discussion, it would also be significant to mention here that there is a strong connection between constructivism and reflective practice, in that constructivism is a theory about knowledge and reflective practice is a PD strategy with roots in the constructivist paradigm (Osterman, 1998). Constructivism and reflective practice share basic assumptions about knowledge and learning. It is significant to trace how English language teachers reflect on their own teaching and students' learning. Moreover, it is also reported that reflective teaching is a systematic inquiry that must be practiced by a teacher to achieve professional growth. Reflective teaching is also known as reflection-on-action (Farrell, 2013).

Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory of learning and development provides a valuable framework for understanding reflection as a socially embedded practice (Collin & Karsenti,

2011), enabling teachers to navigate between the reflective paradigms of individualism and social constructivism. His theory emphasizes the interconnectedness of cognitive and social dimensions in human development, establishing a theoretical basis for understanding “how teachers come to know what they know, how certain concepts in teachers’ consciousness develop over time, and how their learning processes transform them and the activities of L2 teaching” (Johnson, 2009, p. 19). The extent to which educational institutions facilitate meaningful social interactions among teachers plays a crucial role in shaping the depth and effectiveness of teachers’ ongoing professional growth and development (Shah, 2022).

Researcher’s Positionality

As the researcher undertaking this study on ESL TPD in Bangladeshi higher education, I recognized that my background, beliefs, and experiences might influence this research. Being a Bangladeshi national with prior experience in the country’s educational system provided me with an insider perspective on the challenges and opportunities present in the higher-education sector, particularly regarding language instruction. This familiarity enabled me to empathize with participants and approach the study with some insight into the institutional and cultural contexts impacting English language education.

My positionality reflected a constructivist worldview, wherein I believed that knowledge was constructed through social interactions and contextual influences. This perspective guided my understanding that the PD of ESL teachers was not only shaped by individual beliefs and motivations but also by larger systemic forces, including neoliberal policies impacting education in Bangladesh. The study’s critical lens reflected my belief in the importance of equitable and sustainable development practices, particularly in education, where I perceived a need for PD approaches that empowered teachers and enhanced student outcomes.

Recognizing my insider status as both a Bangladeshi and an individual familiar with educational practices in the region, I was conscious of the potential biases this position might introduce. I was particularly mindful of the need to approach findings with objectivity and to avoid assuming that my personal experiences were universal among participants. Additionally, I was attentive to both the advantages and limitations of my insider status, balancing empathy and critical distance to ensure that participants' voices were authentically represented.

Given my background in Bangladeshi and British higher education, I recognized that I held assumptions about the role of English proficiency as a gateway to socio-economic advancement and the perceived value of English in the job market. These assumptions stemmed from my understanding of English as a critical skill for employment and global engagement, as emphasized in the literature on ELT in Bangladesh. While this belief underpinned my commitment to enhancing PD opportunities for ESL teachers, I remained cautious of imposing my expectations on participants.

I understood that my position granted me privileged access to specific insights and perspectives that might not be readily available to external researchers. However, I also recognized the limitations of my viewpoint and strived to engage with participants' experiences and insights with an open mind. My aim was to amplify their voices and provide an authentic representation of their challenges and aspirations.

Participants and Recruitment

I specifically recruited ESL educators whose responses I believed would yield the most fruitful insights using "purposive sampling" (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019, p. 44). Participants were recruited using the following techniques: (a) emails to colleagues and known contacts at selected universities to determine their willingness to participate and/or refer me to others; and

(b) follow-ups to participant referrals at selected universities where I did not have any colleagues or known contacts using the “snowballing method” (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019, p. 44). As Creswell & Guetterman (2019) explain, snowball sampling involves asking participants to nominate additional individuals for the study, allowing researchers to effectively increase the sample size by leveraging participants’ networks. This approach is advantageous in recruiting a larger pool of eligible participants.

An email describing the study was sent to each faculty member at each university individually using the publicly available email addresses posted on the universities’ websites. The email briefly introduced the study’s purpose, outlined the participant criteria, described the interview process, included a consent form, and requested that teachers share the invitation with interested faculty and forward it to eligible students who might be willing to participate in an interview. Interested students then contacted me via email. Following this, a formal invitation was emailed to those students expressing a desire to participate. Based on my experience teaching and researching in the Bangladeshi higher-education sector, I have observed that faculty members at Bangladeshi universities typically welcome researchers to their institutions to generate data and engage in research. I also found them to be receptive to participating in my study.

Overall, 34 participants from five different universities were recruited for this study, which included both university ESL teacher participants (n=19) and student participants (n=15). The 19 university ESL teachers, encompassing both beginning and experienced teachers, were interviewed individually. I included teacher participants of varying sexes, years of service, and institutional affiliations—spanning both public and private universities—to capture a diverse range of perspectives on PD practices across different stages of their careers and within distinct

institutional contexts (see Table 1). All student participants from both public and private universities were enrolled in the English department and participated in focus-group interviews. Based on each university's curriculum, they studied either English language exclusively or a combination of English language and literature (see Table 2).

The universities from which participants were recruited were selected based on ranking, public or private status, course structure and semester system, and student reputation in Bangladesh. This selection covered both the higher-ranked universities and lower-ranked universities to achieve balanced data. According to Saldaña (2011), diversity of experience is important because it increases the range of input the researcher can draw on to make conclusions or derive insights. Jahangirnagar University (JU) and the University of Dhaka (Institute of Modern Languages) are the two public universities selected for this study from Bangladesh, while North South University (NSU), East West University (EWU), and Notre Dame University Bangladesh (NDUB) were the three private universities.

Table 1

Demographic Information for Teacher Participants

Type of University	Pseudonym	Years of Service	Teaching Level	Male (M) / Female (F)	Employment Status	Tenure Status	Assignment
Private (North South University -NSU)	Shaila	11	Undergraduate	F	Full time	Non-Tenure	Research, Teaching, Administration
	Samad	4	Undergraduate	M	Full time	Non-Tenure	Research, Teaching, Administration
	Kashmira	4	Undergraduate	F	Full time	Non-Tenure	Research, Teaching, Administration
	Meherun	20	Undergraduate	F	Full time	Non-Tenure	Research, Teaching, Administration
Public (Jahangirnagar)	Selim	3	Undergraduate and Graduate	M	Full time	Tenured	Research, Teaching, Administration

University- JU)	Rezaul	10	Undergraduate and Graduate	M	Full time	Tenured	Research, Teaching, Administration
	Hussain	10	Undergraduate and Graduate	M	Full time	Tenured	Research, Teaching, Administration
	Nargis	18	Undergraduate and Graduate	F	Full time	Tenured	Research, Teaching, Administration
Private (East West University- EWU)	Mousumi	16	Undergraduate and Graduate	F	Full time	Non- Tenure	Research, Teaching, Administration
	Tanvir	5	Undergraduate	M	Full time	Non- Tenure	Research, Teaching, Administration
	Muntasir	17	Undergraduate and Graduate	M	Full time	Non- Tenure	Research, Teaching, Administration
	Nila	9	Undergraduate and Graduate	F	Full time	Non- Tenure	Research, Teaching, Administration
Public (University of Dhaka- Institute of Modern Languages)	Mahmud	12	Undergraduate and Graduate	M	Full time	Tenured	Research, Teaching, Administration
	Russel	6	Undergraduate	M	Full time	Tenured	Research, Teaching, Administration
	Ziaur	32	Undergraduate and Graduate	M	Full time	Tenured	Research, Teaching, Administration
Private (Notre Dame University Bangladesh - NDUB)	Jesmin	10	Undergraduate	F	Full time	Non- Tenure	Research, Teaching, Administration
	Mahfuzur	25	Undergraduate and Graduate	M	Full time	Non- Tenure	Research, Teaching, Administration
	Tanjila	21	Undergraduate	F	Full time	Non- Tenure	Research, Teaching, Administration
	Zabin	4	Undergraduate	F	Full time	Non- Tenure	Research, Teaching, Administration

Table 2*Demographic Information for Student Participants*

Type of University	Pseudonym	Male (M) / Female (F)	Level	Program
Private (Southwest University)	Khaled Saima Sunjida	M F F	Undergraduate Undergraduate Undergraduate	English Language and Literature
Public (Joynogor University)	Rafi Faisal Zarif	M M M	Graduate Graduate Graduate	English Language and Literature
Private (West South University)	Nova Wasna Peuli	F F F	Graduate Graduate Graduate	English Language and Literature
Public (Kushtia University)	Shuvo Nujhat Farhana	M F F	Graduate Graduate Graduate	English Language
Private (International Southern University)	Nakib Tamanna Iffat	M F F	Graduate Graduate Undergraduate	English Language and Literature

Ethical Considerations

This study followed the procedures required by the University of Manitoba's Research Ethics Board 2 (REB 2) and received ethical approval (Protocol # R2-2021:018 [HS24705]). To protect participants' identities, I used pseudonyms (Samad, Kashmira, etc.). During data generation, I remained cognizant of ethical issues and my privilege as a (former) insider to their community and as a doctoral candidate. I tried to be honest and respectful throughout the research process, prioritizing participants' feelings and needs over my own. This effort applied to several components of the process, including where, when, and how interviews were conducted, the types of questions I asked, and the way I asked them.

Participants were provided with an invitation letter that included informed consent documents to ensure they fully understood all matters pertaining to their participation. All steps to maintain privacy and confidentiality were explained in the informed consent form signed prior

to the initiation of the study. Participants were reminded of their right to withdraw without penalty at any time. A copy of the interview questions was forwarded to the participants before each interview so they could ask for clarification, refuse to take part, or decide to answer any or all questions. The interviews recorded in the audio-visual format were transcribed by the researcher using Otter.ai transcription software, and following transcription the recordings were safely stored in a locked filing cabinet in a locked office in the researcher's home. All audio recordings were then deleted. Participants were given the opportunity to complete member checks and review their transcripts and make edits, adding or deleting information for up to one week, after which time the transcripts were analyzed.

I explained the data collection procedures in detail in the letter of informed consent for those interested in participating in my study. The study did not require formal permission from public and private universities in Bangladesh to recruit participants, enabling my direct access to teachers and students. All steps taken to maintain participants' privacy and confidentiality were also explained in the informed consent form signed prior to initiation of each interview (Appendices C and D). To ensure that my research was conducted in an ethical manner, I made it clear that participation in the study was voluntary. Participants were asked to read both documents and were invited to ask any questions or share any concerns with me regarding their participation. Those questions/concerns were addressed before any data generation began.

Data management (i.e., collection, storage, and retrieval) procedures were set up before all the interviews were conducted, and this process continued for the duration of data analysis and reporting of this study's findings. I created a separate file for each participant to organize the study's data. Data in all its forms were stored in a safe, confidential location, not accessible to anyone other than me and my advisor. All data that could identify participants, such as contact

information, transcripts, interview guides, and audio recordings, were stored on an encrypted password-protected laptop and external hard drive and kept safe.

Data Generation

Teachers and students who agreed to participate were emailed the schedule, and I elicited suitable interview times from each respondent to conduct each interview. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers and focus-group interviews were conducted with students using Zoom. The sessions were audio and/or video recorded for participants, depending upon their preference. The recorded data was subsequently transcribed using Otter.ai, an automated transcription tool. Considering the likelihood of transcription errors, especially when working with ESL speakers, I carefully reviewed each transcript while listening to the original recordings to ensure accuracy. I manually edited and polished the transcriptions for accuracy, clarity, and completeness. Only after this initial verification and refinement did I share the transcripts with participants for member checking, giving them the opportunity to confirm the accuracy of their contributions and suggest any necessary clarifications or corrections. Participants were invited to review their transcripts—typically a process taking around thirty minutes—with the option to add, remove, or revise content, including omitting any potentially identifiable remarks. They had one week to respond, and non-response was taken as confirmation of satisfaction with the transcript and consent to its use in the research. Nobody responded with changes. Additionally, participants were given the opportunity to request an electronic copy of the final report, as noted in the informed consent form.

I conducted 19 one-on-one interviews with ESL teachers and five focus-group interviews with the 15 students. Each small focus group was limited to three students from the same university to facilitate in-depth, interactive discussion and rich qualitative data generation (Katz-

Buonincontro, 2022). In qualitative educational research, one-on-one interviews are a popular approach and are “ideal for interviewing participants who are not hesitant to speak, who are articulate, and who can share ideas comfortably” (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019, p. 218).

Interviews were conducted in English because the participating teachers and students possessed sufficient proficiency to communicate effectively in that language. However, the process was neither as smooth nor as swift as I had hoped. In certain instances, I faced delays of up to a month without conducting any interviews, largely due to teachers repeatedly deferring for various professional and personal reasons. Moreover, since the interviews took place during the COVID-19 pandemic, many teachers and students encountered health-related challenges that hindered their ability to schedule interviews despite their willingness to participate. During the interviews, along with using the Zoom recording system, I also used a digital audio recorder as a backup. The data collection matrix displayed in Table 3 below demonstrates how the combined data sets enabled me to address my research questions.

Table 3

Data Collection Matrix

Research Questions	Data Source #1	Data Source #2
Overarching question: What are Bangladeshi university ESL teachers’ perspectives on their PD needs, and what are their views about the role of public and private universities in providing PD for them?	Teachers’ virtual in-depth interviews	X
1.What are ESL teachers’ perceptions about PD and training in universities in Bangladesh?	Teachers’ virtual in-depth interviews	X
2.What are teachers’ perspectives on the PD needs of university ESL teachers in Bangladesh?	Teachers’ virtual in-depth interviews	X
3.What are students’ perspectives on ELT in universities in Bangladesh?	Students’ focus-group interviews	Students’ virtual focus-group interviews

4.What do ESL teachers think about how their context and beliefs can be used to shape their PD programs?	Teachers' virtual in-depth interviews	X
5.Which PD initiatives are ESL teachers engaged in within Bangladeshi universities?	Teachers' virtual in-depth interviews	X
6.What new or alternative PD approaches or initiatives can be proposed for the university English language teachers in Bangladesh?	Teachers' virtual in-depth interviews	Students' virtual focus-group interviews

Data Analysis Techniques

Qualitative data analysis involves organizing information, transcribing spoken or written content into a typed format, selecting between manual or computer-based analysis, reviewing the database, coding and categorizing raw data, identifying themes, representing the data, and interpreting the findings (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Creswell & Poth, 2018). In conducting qualitative data analysis, I first employed Otter.ai to transcribe the recorded sessions. According to Sterne and Sawhney (2022), “Otter.ai’s main business is what it calls automated transcription—of meetings, speeches, talks, any audio that can get turned into data” (p. 299). This transcription tool worked in tandem with Zoom’s secure recording features, providing an efficient process for generating initial transcripts, though these required careful review and manual correction to ensure accuracy. Moreover, Archibald et al. (2019) noted that Zoom’s secure recording supports participant confidentiality and reduced logistical complexities.

To ensure high-quality data for analysis, I meticulously reviewed, edited, and polished the AI-generated transcripts of interviews conducted with ESL teachers and students. During transcription, I clearly distinguished between the interviewer’s and interviewee’s comments. I carefully listened to recordings, edited, and polished the transcripts where Otter.ai had generated inaccurate text. To preserve contextual details, I also indicated pauses, laughter, or inaudible

segments. This comprehensive approach ensured that the text data captured the nuances necessary for thorough analysis. This process was particularly time-intensive for focus-group interviews, requiring several hours of detailed work to accurately capture and transcribe the participants' discussions. Zoom and Otter.ai were useful technology research tools as utilized in this study.

To read, code, and identify themes from my interview-data transcripts in Microsoft Word, I began by reviewing each transcript thoroughly and highlighting key phrases. During the initial stage of coding, I closely examined the transcripts to identify units of meaning evident in the data, assigning descriptive codes to these segments using comment features. For coding, I grouped similar codes to identify thematic categories, using the "Find and Replace" function in Word to highlight related segments of text and organize them into a summary table. Ultimately, I clustered the initial 30 codes into five major themes for the teacher data and four major themes for the student data, ensuring both clarity and alignment with the study's objectives (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). This systematic process enabled me to move from codes to categories and themes. I presented themes along with frequency counts in tables to summarize the results. The findings were then discussed narratively, incorporating direct quotes, interpretive comments, and links to the existing literature. Frequency labels such as *high*, *medium*, and *low* were determined based on the proportion of participants referencing a specific code or sub-theme. A *high* frequency denotes responses from most participants (more than two-thirds), *medium* reflects references from approximately half of the participants, and *low* indicates fewer than half. This categorization enables a qualitative representation of prevalence without reducing participant voices to mere numerical values.

Criteria for Ensuring Quality

To ensure the validity and quality of my research, I incorporated two key validation strategies: triangulation and member checking. I also adopted additional techniques that enhance credibility, authenticity, and transparency in representing participants' experiences and perspectives. Here, I outline how each approach supports the rigor and trustworthiness of my study.

Triangulation

Qualitative researchers employ data triangulation, a process that combines multiple data sources or data collection methods—such as interviews, focus groups, and documents—to confirm or corroborate research findings (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). I applied triangulation by using two types of interview data: in-depth interviews with teachers, and focus groups with students (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). Triangulating these two perspectives, I aimed to cross-verify findings, strengthening my confidence that the patterns and themes I identified were consistent. According to Creswell and Guetterman (2019), “The inquirer examines each information source and finds evidence to support a theme” (p. 261).

Member Checking and Participant Validation

Ensuring accuracy in my interpretations was essential, so I incorporated participants directly in validating this study's findings through the process of member checking. As part of this process, transcripts of individual interviews were emailed to teacher participants and student participants, allowing them to review the transcriptions to ensure they accurately reflected the discussion I had with them. Participants were asked to review their transcripts and were given one week to add, remove, or modify content, as well as omit potentially identifiable remarks. I asked questions such as, “Is this transcript an accurate reflection of our conversation?,” “Is there

anything missing?,” “Is there anything that is not accurate?,” and “Would you like to add or delete anything?” Through member checking, I also requested that participants comment on the accuracy of verbatim quotes. I obtained their approval to use their direct personal quotes in written or verbal reports of the study. By involving participants in the review and approval of transcripts and direct quotes, member checking contributed to the credibility of the study.

Additional Validation Strategies

I used several complementary techniques to strengthen the validity of my study. I engaged in prolonged interviews and took time to build rapport with participants, which encouraged them to share more in-depth insights (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). I emphasized the importance of participants’ voices by retaining their original phrasing and explanations whenever possible, ensuring that this study’s findings remained true to their words and intentions. I explained my process of member checking to participants to ensure transparency and foster collaboration.

For readers of this thesis working in similar contexts, I have provided detailed descriptions of the study’s context, participants’ backgrounds, and the broader setting of TPD in Bangladeshi higher education. This level of detail will allow readers to understand the teaching and learning-environment, providing a foundation for readers to form their own connections to this study’s findings. I also included clear methodological documentation detailing my choices and processes so that readers can assess the rigor and credibility of my study.

Strengths and Limitations of Qualitative Research

Qualitative research offers a range of strengths and limitations. One of the primary strengths of qualitative research is its ability to explore complex issues in depth. This approach provides consumers of research findings with a fuller understanding of participants’ lived

experiences and perspectives, particularly in contexts where the broader research field and current body of scholarship offer limited knowledge on the topic (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Qualitative methods uncover nuances often missed in quantitative research by focusing on individuals' narratives. Additionally, this research type allows for flexibility, adjusting research questions and methods as new insights and questions emerge during the study. Regarding limitations, among the most significant is the potential for researcher bias. Because qualitative research relies heavily on interpretation, the researcher's perspective may influence the results, potentially compromising the study's credibility. Further, the typically small sample sizes can restrict generalizability, as the findings, while relevant for the context from which they were generated, may not be relevant for different contexts. I now address the strengths and limitations of the methods used.

One-on-One Interviews

One-on-one interviews provide personalized interactions that encourage participants to share comprehensive responses. This format enables researchers to delve deeper into responses, allowing for clarification and exploration of critical themes as they arise. Interviewing individuals is particularly effective for discussing sensitive topics, if the interviews are conducted in private settings. One-on-one interactions with interviewees can foster rapport between the interviewer and participant, encourage honesty, and enhance data quality (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019; Creswell & Poth, 2018). On the other hand, while one-on-one interviews yield rich data, they are also time-consuming, which can limit the number of participants a single researcher can include. The time required often results in smaller sample sizes, limiting the conclusions that can be drawn. The analysis of interview data is similarly labor-intensive, necessitating careful transcription, coding, and interpretation. Moreover, the presence of the

interviewer may influence participants' responses, potentially introducing bias. A researcher working alone on data analysis and interpretation is also a limitation as inter-coder reliability cannot be established.

Focus-Group Interviews

Focus groups bring together individuals with shared experiences, fostering an environment for dynamic interaction and discussion. This setting can generate richer data, as participants build upon one another's insights, highlighting group norms and common understandings (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Consequently, focus groups provide unique perspectives on the social dynamics surrounding a topic and serve as an efficient method for gathering diverse viewpoints simultaneously (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). However, focus groups can be challenging for researchers to facilitate, and dominant voices can override the contributions that others in the group who are quieter. Focus groups may be susceptible to groupthink, wherein some participants conform to the opinions of more dominant voices, resulting in less genuine responses. Furthermore, the presence of others can discourage individuals from disclosing sensitive information. The group format may also restrict the depth of each participant's responses, particularly when they feel uncomfortable expressing dissenting opinions in a public setting (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Snowball Sampling

Snowball sampling is particularly valuable for reaching populations that may be challenging to access, such as marginalized or specialized groups. By relying on referrals from initial participants, researchers can locate individuals who meet the study's specific criteria, allowing for a more in-depth exploration of niche topics (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). This method enables researchers to build trust within a community and generate data from a broad,

albeit not necessarily representative, population. While effective for accessing hard-to-reach populations, snowball sampling poses representativeness issues. As participants refer individuals they know, the sample may reflect a narrow, homogeneous network, potentially limiting diversity in perspectives (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). This sampling method can introduce bias, as the selected sample may not accurately represent the study's broader population (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019).

Internet-Mediated Interviews

Internet-mediated interview research using platforms such as Zoom videoconferencing has become an increasingly popular tool for qualitative data collection, offering both unique advantages and challenges for researchers and participants alike. This approach allows for data generation from geographically diverse participants (Archibald et al., 2019), which enhances its utility in research requiring broad participation. Other primary advantages of using Zoom for qualitative interviews are convenience and cost-effectiveness. Zoom eliminates travel time and associated costs, allowing both researchers and participants to join from any location with internet access. Additionally, Zoom's recording feature is a significant asset, allowing interviews to be recorded directly to the cloud or local devices, simplifying data management and providing a reliable way to review interactions for analysis. Another benefit of using Zoom is its user-friendly interface, which most participants find intuitive. Even individuals with limited technical expertise often report that Zoom is easy to navigate compared to other video conferencing platforms, which makes it suitable for a wide range of participants (Archibald et al., 2019).

Despite its benefits, Zoom presents notable limitations. A major drawback is the dependency on internet connectivity and equipment quality. Poor internet connections can cause video or audio disruptions, creating potential issues such as lag, frozen video, or unclear sound

quality, which may interrupt the flow of conversation and negatively impact the quality of data generated. These issues are particularly prevalent in interviews with participants in remote areas or those with limited access to high-speed internet (Archibald et al., 2019). Technical difficulties can be frustrating for participants and researchers alike, potentially affecting rapport and participant engagement. Non-verbal cues, which play a critical role in qualitative research, may be harder to interpret over video-conferencing platforms like Zoom. Additionally, virtual interviews may impact rapport that can be more naturally established in face-to-face settings, potentially limiting the depth of information shared (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Conclusion

This study's qualitative design offered an appropriate approach for examining the PD of ESL teachers in Bangladeshi higher education. By utilizing interpretivist and constructivist methodologies, the qualitative methodology captured nuanced insights into the perspectives of both teachers and students regarding PD, while also highlighting the systemic, institutional, and socio-economic factors that influence the effectiveness of English language instruction in Bangladesh. The adoption of internet-mediated interviews via Zoom served as both a practical response to pandemic-related restrictions and a crucial method for engaging a diverse participant pool across various regions in Bangladesh. In the chapters that follow, I present detailed discussions of the findings generated from the data considered.

Chapter 5: Findings and Discussion: ESL Teachers' Interviews

Introduction

This chapter discusses findings resulting from interviews with ESL teachers. The findings are organized by the primary research question, sub-questions, and five themes identified through data analysis. The themes are: (1) the importance of English language teaching (ELT), (2) the need for professional development and training, (3) the quality of English teachers, (4) professional development approaches, and (5) professional development and commodification of English. The discussion of each theme begins with a brief overview and is followed by a detailed examination of the subthemes and codes identified during the analysis. Reporting the findings also includes a summary table for each theme, displaying the subthemes, codes, and frequencies, which illuminates recurring patterns. Reporting frequencies will offer readers a sense of which themes were dominant in the interview comments. The summary of the subthemes corresponding to each major theme is presented in Table 4 below. To maintain anonymity, all teacher participants are identified by pseudonyms, followed by an abbreviation that denotes their institutional affiliation: PB for Public University and PR for Private University.

Table 4

Summary Table of Themes and Subthemes

Thematic Category	Frequency
Theme 1: Importance of English Language Teaching	
1.1 The Role of English in Academic, Professional, and Economic Integration	High
1.2 Impact of English Language Resources on Teaching and Development	High
Theme 2: Need for Professional Development and Training	
2.1 Lack of Structured Teacher Preparation and Institutional Support	High
2.2 Systemic Need for Contextualized PD in Higher-Education ESL in Bangladesh	High
Theme 3: Quality of English Teachers	

3.1 Systemic Teacher Development Gaps Obstruct Quality English Education	High
3.2 Institutional Priorities Undermine ESL Teachers' PD	High
Theme 4: Professional Development Approaches	
4.1 Teacher Development Approaches: Perceptions, Constraints, and Contextual Applications	High
4.2 Contextual Gap and Western Dependence in ESL PD	High
Theme 5: Professional Development and Commodification of English	
5.1 Market-Driven ELT Undermines Pedagogical Integrity in Bangladesh	High
5.2 Systemic Marginalization of ELT Professionals in Market-Driven Academia	High

Research Participants

This section presents information about the teachers who took part in this study. As displayed in Table 5 below, a total of 19 teachers representing five different higher-education institutions in Bangladesh agreed to participate. Twelve were employed by three different private institutions and the remaining seven worked at two different public universities. The interviews conducted ranged from 58 minutes to one hour and 51 minutes, with the average interview lasting one hour and 21 minutes.

Table 5

Teacher Participants, Institutions, and Interview Durations

Institution	Teacher Participants (Pseudonym)	Interview Duration
Private (North-South University-NSU)	Shaila	1 hour and 44 minutes
	Samad	1 hour and 37 minutes
	Kashmira	1 hour and 48 minutes
	Meherun	1 hour and 20 minutes
	Selim	1 hour and 51 minutes

Public (Jahangirnagar University- JU)	Rezaul	1 hour and 27 minutes
	Hussain	1 hour and 26 minutes
	Nargis	58 minutes
Private (East West University-EWU)	Mousumi	1 hour and 24 minutes
	Tanvir	1 hour and 32 minutes
	Muntasir	1 hour and 18 minutes
	Nila	1 hour and 01 minutes
Public (University of Dhaka-Institute of Modern Languages)	Mahmud	1 hour and 10 minutes
	Russel	1 hour and 06 minutes
	Ziaur	58 mins
Private (Notre Dame University Bangladesh - NDUB)	Jesmin	1 hour and 33 minutes
	Mahfuzur	1 hour and 08 minutes
	Tanjila	1 hour and 15 minutes
	Zabin	1 hour and 10 minutes
Average Interview Duration		1 hour and 21 minutes

Theme 1: Importance of English Language Teaching

This theme explores English Language Teachers' role in global competitiveness, economic integration, and professional advancement. The findings reveal the pervasive influence of English in fostering employability and institutional prestige, supported by evidence of its integration into educational and economic policies. The subthemes and codes identified during data analysis are presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Summary Table of Subthemes and Codes for Theme 1: Importance of English Language

Teaching

Subtheme 1.1 The Role of English in Academic, Professional, and Economic Integration	Frequency
1.1.1 Global competition	High
1.1.2 Higher education	High
1.1.3 Socio-economic development	High
1.1.4 Academic missions	High
1.1.5 Professional advancement	High
Subtheme 1.2 Impact of English Language Resources on Teaching and Development	
1.2.1 Lack of resources	High
1.2.2 Impact of resources on progress	Medium
1.2.3 Need for updated academic materials	Medium
1.2.4 Systemic resource gaps	Low

1.1 The Role of English in Academic, Professional and Economic Integration

During interviews, all 19 teacher participants emphasized the indispensable role of English in both academic and economic contexts in Bangladesh. For instance, Nargis (PB), a teacher participant, asserted that “English proficiency, with its scientific-like technicality, is essential for economic integration, global competitiveness, and professional advancement.” Similarly, Samad (PR) emphasized the vital importance of English proficiency in Bangladesh’s academic and professional domains, noting that “we are producing all these graduates who have all these other degrees but do not have the basic communication skills in English,” which may hinder their ability to thrive in both local and global markets. Furthermore, Tanjila (PR) shared that “English proficiency is vital for achieving the academic missions of Bangladeshi universities, particularly in terms of accessing and disseminating knowledge across diverse disciplines.”

Building on these perspectives, Rezaul (PB) articulated the intersection of English teaching with national development goals, stating, “Amid Bangladesh’s economic growth and global engagement, English language proficiency through effective ESL instruction is essential to the nation’s future success.” The functional importance of English within both domestic and international contexts was further emphasized by Ziaur (PB), who argued that English is indispensable not only for immigration or higher education abroad but also for securing employment within Bangladesh’s private sector. As Nila (PR) succinctly observed, “English is a very important language so far as international communication is concerned and also as a language in general,” thus reinforcing the multifaceted significance of English in the contemporary world. These insights were provided in direct response to an interview question on PD and teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) in Bangladeshi universities, through which participants consistently highlighted a strong connection between PD and the broader significance of English language teaching in the national context. These perspectives reflect a shared view that English proficiency is essential to effective teacher development and Bangladesh’s academic and socio-economic advancement.

The participants’ responses collectively emphasize that English proficiency is not simply a language skill but a pivotal tool for navigating academic, professional, and national development landscapes in Bangladesh. Nargis’s (PB) view of English as having a “scientific-like technicality” suggests that it is perceived as a specialized linguistic system integral to knowledge production and professional discourse. Samad’s (PR) concern about graduates lacking basic communication skills despite academic qualifications indicates a perceived disconnect between formal education and employability. His comment underscores English as a threshold skill without which other credentials may lose practical utility. Tanjila’s (PR) assertion

reinforces this point, identifying English as essential for achieving institutional academic goals, particularly regarding access to global knowledge and scholarly engagement. Rezaul (PB) extends this view to a macro level by explicitly connecting English teaching to Bangladesh's broader economic aspirations, framing ESL as a national imperative. The salience of these comments lies in their convergence: participants regard English not only as beneficial but as indispensable for individual and national advancement.

The functional importance of English in both domestic and international contexts was underscored by Ziaur (PB), who argued that it is essential not only for immigration and higher education abroad but also for employment within Bangladesh's private sector. His view anchors English within local economic structures, highlighting its role as a *de facto* gatekeeper in the job market and underscoring the need for TESL PD to meet context-specific demands. Similarly, Nila (PR) described English as "a very important language" for international communication and in general use, affirming its dual function as both a global *lingua franca* and a national asset. Together, these perspectives reinforce the call for TESL practices that prepare teachers to address both global and local communicative needs. Taken together, this data reveals that teachers internalize English proficiency as central to both their own PD and their students' futures—framing ESL pedagogy as a developmental, rather than purely linguistic, enterprise. This perspective suggests that language instruction is viewed not merely as a technical skill but as a transformative process closely tied to broader educational and socio-economic advancement.

These findings echo but also extend previous research. Earlier studies by Ara (2020) and Rahman et al. (2019a) highlight the role of English in academic mobility and employment in Bangladesh yet stop short of directly linking ESL teaching to national development goals. My study, in contrast, captures how university teachers explicitly perceive ESL not only as a tool for

individual student success but also as a mechanism for economic integration and global competitiveness, as voiced by Rezaul (PB). This interpretation resonates with Ali and Hamid's (2022) view of English as an instrument of neoliberal development, but this study's findings provide more grounded, practitioner-level insights into how such ideologies are internalized and articulated in local institutional contexts.

Notably, the participants' articulation of English as a "scientific-like" tool, particularly in Nargis's (PB) quote, suggests a view of English that transcends communicative competence and implies its epistemic authority in academic domains. This perception aligns with Pennycook's (2017) critique of English as a gatekeeper of knowledge hierarchies but is expressed here not as resistance but as acceptance of English's hegemony as a necessary condition for academic legitimacy. Thus, my study highlights a tension not explicitly addressed in earlier works: a pragmatic embrace of English driven by institutional imperatives, despite the broader critiques of linguistic imperialism.

Further, while prior studies have noted teachers' awareness of English's value (Chowdhury & Kabir, 2014; Hamid & Sultana, 2024; Sultana, 2014), my study adds depth by revealing their situated, strategic rationale for prioritizing PD in TESL. The explicit connection between PD and national development suggests a shift in teacher identity—from mere content deliverers to agents of socio-economic transformation through language education. This view was largely absent in previous literature, where PD was often treated as a discrete, skill-upgrading activity rather than a platform for broader systemic change.

The data reveal a clear pattern: participants view English proficiency as foundational to institutional goals and national progress. Their narratives consistently connect TPD in English

with Bangladesh's socio-economic future. This analysis suggests that ESL is not merely a pedagogical concern but a strategic national resource within the Bangladeshi university context.

1.2 Impact of English Language Resources on Teaching and Development

Although many participants recognize the importance of accessing English language academic resources and global research materials for enhancing higher education, fostering PD among educators, and advancing research in Bangladesh, these resources remain largely inaccessible. Access to such materials is essential not only for improving teaching and scholarship but also for fulfilling institutional and professional expectations. As Muntasir (PR) emphasized, access to current academic literature directly impacts career progression: "Our promotion and tenure depend on research and publications, but limited access to academic resources and updated materials hinders our progress." Similarly, Zabin (PR) highlighted the disconnect between curricular demands and the availability of resources, noting, "Our syllabus recommends globally recognized Western textbooks, which are not always easily accessible." The scarcity of quality academic materials in local markets further complicates the situation. Jesmin (PR) remarked, "I like to depend on good books for my research and professional development, but good books are not available in the market in Bangladesh."

Participants also stressed the centrality of English proficiency and institutional support in enabling meaningful engagement with global educational content. As Mousumi (PR) observed, "Many quality books and educational materials are in English, so making them accessible is essential for improving student learning and enhancing our own teaching and research." However, despite repeated expressions of need, institutional mechanisms for acquiring updated resources remain ineffective. Mahmud (PB) explained, "The university hardly asks ... we fill up the form, and we tell them our needs, but we do not see any reflection of collecting updated

materials at the library.” Rezaul (PB) further confirmed the limited availability of contemporary academic materials, observing, “Recent books and research are not that much available ... we have limited access to good journals and other teaching learning related publications.” In response to the interview question concerning their perspectives on the teaching resources they use, the significance of those resources, and whether their English language teaching methods are traditional or contemporary, participants emphasized the link between PD and access to current, updated English language teaching materials and publications. These insights underscore the importance of accessible, up-to-date English language resources in supporting effective teaching and PD in Bangladeshi higher education.

Jesmin’s (PR) remark draws attention to a systemic issue affecting academic practice in Bangladesh: the scarcity of high-quality academic texts. Her dependence on such books underscores a pedagogical and scholarly orientation grounded in global academic standards. The lack of availability suggests a misalignment between educators’ needs and the infrastructural support institutions or markets provide. This issue echoes Zabin’s (PR) later observation regarding recommended textbooks being difficult to access, suggesting a broader institutional and market failure in resourcing higher education.

Mousumi (PR) reinforced the significance of English proficiency and access to English-language materials. Her statement situates English-language access as a dual lever: improving both student outcomes and instructors’ pedagogical competencies. Her view reinforces Jesmin’s (PR) but adds the dimension of linguistic proficiency as a necessary precondition for engaging with global resources. Her perspective also signals a pragmatic understanding among educators that PD in a globalized academic landscape is inseparable from access to and proficiency in English.

Muntasir (PR) pointed out structural constraints, and his insight highlights how limited access to updated literature directly hinders academic career progression. His comment introduces the institutional and performative dimensions of resource access: not merely a pedagogical concern, but a determinant of academic visibility and success. This concern is institutional, tied to mechanisms such as promotion and tenure, indicating how limited resources can suppress scholarly productivity.

Zabin (PR) echoed these limitations, aligning her statement with those of Jesmin (PR) and Muntasir (PR) to highlight a consistent gap between curricular expectations and the actual availability of material support. This disconnect between policy and practice renders syllabi aspirational rather than actionable, suggesting systemic neglect or under-resourcing that undermines the intent of globalized curricula.

Mahmud's (PB) experience reflects a breakdown in institutional responsiveness. Despite formal procedures, there is a perceived absence of action, which discourages engagement and signals a lack of alignment between faculty needs and administrative practice. Rezaul's (PB) comment reiterates a collective concern over restricted access to updated scholarship. This limitation curtails teachers' ability to remain current and undermines both teaching quality and academic credibility.

In this study, participants consistently emphasized the essential role of English language academic resources in enabling effective teaching and meaningful PD. Their concerns reflect structural and administrative obstacles that align with findings in the literature (Hamid & Sultana, 2024; Rahman & Pandian, 2018). According to the literature reviewed, limited access to quality ELT materials and institutional support in Bangladesh continues to hinder the efficacy of both initial teacher education (ITE) and TPD. Jesmin (PR) and Zabin's (PR) views illustrate the

infrastructural deficiencies noted by Ali and Hamid (2022), who found that access to quality resources remains stratified and inequitably distributed, particularly disadvantaging those outside urban or elite institutions.

This finding also resonates with Zahid (2025), who argues that disparities in the implementation of communicative language teaching (CLT) stem from inadequate access to English language materials and poor logistical support. Furthermore, Muntasir's (PR) observation connects the literature on institutional performance with academic research expectations, aligning with Canniffe et al. (2024), who noted that university teachers in many contexts are judged increasingly on their research outputs, even when they lack the necessary infrastructure. This alignment underscores the neoliberal pressures on HEIs in Bangladesh, where global metrics evaluate academic labor but are inadequately resourced to meet them (Guthrie et al., 2024; Mockler, 2013).

Notably, this study's data provides additional nuance by showing how educators themselves articulate these mismatches. Unlike the top-down critiques found in existing literature, these data foreground educators' lived experiences, revealing how institutional expectations can be both externally imposed and internally resisted when they lack adequate support. Thus, while there is alignment with the broader scholarly consensus on the resource gap, my study contributes new empirical insight by illuminating how this group of educators link PD, resource access, and performance appraisal in their day-to-day realities.

Participants in this study consistently identified access to up-to-date English language academic resources as a cornerstone for effective teaching, research productivity, and professional advancement. Their insights reveal a recurrent pattern: while higher education in Bangladesh increasingly integrates global standards through its curricula and performance

expectations, the material and institutional infrastructures remain inadequate. This gap constrains educators' ability to meet professional benchmarks and impairs student learning outcomes.

Collectively, these findings indicate that bridging the divide between curricular ambitions and resource realities is essential for enhancing the quality and equity of higher education in Bangladesh.

These findings underscore that, despite shared recognition of the value of English in fostering academic and professional advancement, teachers across institutional settings in this study encounter distinct challenges shaped by their specific institutional ecologies. A comparative analysis of English teacher perspectives from public (PB) and private (PR) universities reveals both convergence and divergence in how participants conceptualize teacher preparation, pedagogical practice, and institutional support within English language education. Both PB and PR teacher participants in this study uniformly acknowledged the critical role of English proficiency in national development, academic advancement, and professional mobility. This sample of teachers across institutional types articulated English as not merely a communicative tool but an epistemic resource fundamental to achieving academic missions and socio-economic goals. For instance, Nargis (PB) referred to English as possessing a "scientific-like technicality," while Tanjila (PR) emphasized its indispensability in "accessing and disseminating knowledge across diverse disciplines." Similarly, all study participants highlighted a strong alignment between TPD and broader institutional expectations, suggesting shared challenges in fulfilling their pedagogical roles amid increasing global and national demands.

However, divergent experiences emerged regarding institutional support, particularly for access to academic resources. PR university teachers voiced acute frustrations with market availability and affordability of teaching materials, with Jesmin (PR) stating, "Good books are

not available in the market in Bangladesh.” In contrast, PB participants more frequently emphasized bureaucratic inefficiencies, as Mahmud (PB) noted, “We tell them our needs, but we do not see any reflection of collecting updated materials at the library.” These institutional disparities suggest that while both groups face systemic obstacles, the nature of those challenges is mediated by organizational structures and resource procurement mechanisms unique to each institutional type. No significant differences were observed between PR and PB teacher participants in relation to their valuation of English as a tool for professional and academic integration. However, the contrasting accounts of infrastructural support reveal how institutional culture shapes the day-to-day realities of English language educators, reinforcing the need for context-sensitive policy interventions that acknowledge the differences between public and private universities in Bangladesh.

Theme 2: Need for Professional Development and Training

Theme 2 underscores the dual importance of pre-service and in-service training for equipping educators with contemporary teaching knowledge and competencies. The discussion of findings in this section delves into the gaps between existing PD provisions and the pedagogical demands of CLT frameworks. The two sub-themes and related codes identified while analyzing the data are presented in Table 7.

Table 7

Summary Table of Subthemes and Codes for Theme 2: Need for Professional Development and Training

Subtheme 2.1 Lack of Structured Teacher Preparation and Institutional Support	Frequency
2.1.1 Entry into ESL without training	High
2.1.2 Institutional neglect of teacher education	High
2.1.3 PD is informal and self-directed	High
2.1.4 Absence of institutional infrastructure for ongoing PD	High
2.1.5 Peer mentorship replaces formal induction	Medium

2.1.6 Recruitment favors credentials over teaching skills	Medium
Subtheme 2.2 Systemic Need for Contextualized PD in Higher-Education ESL in Bangladesh	
2.2.1 PD as collaborative knowledge-sharing	High
2.2.2 No formal collaborative spaces for ESL faculty	High
2.2.3 ESL teachers lack CLT-related training	High
2.2.4 CLT shift demands targeted PD	Medium
2.2.5 PD for ESL ignored in education policy	Medium

2.1 Lack of Structured Teacher Preparation and Institutional Support

In response to the interview question regarding their perspectives on the PD needs of university ESL teachers in Bangladesh, the participants provided the comments that follow, revealing a persistent gap between their PD needs and the rising demands of English instruction in higher education. Notably, all the teacher participants indicated that university-level ESL teacher preparation in Bangladesh lacks structure, with many entering the profession without formal training or foundational teaching knowledge. Selim (PB) remarked, “At the university, everyone becomes a teacher without training ... I have always felt under-equipped, not knowing the theories or basic methods of language teaching.” This absence of structured training persists despite the increasing demand for competent English language instruction in higher education. Meherun (PR) noted, “Actually, I did not receive any training ... what our institution did is that the department used to assign us with some senior teachers.” PD opportunities are often informal and unsupported by institutions. Nargis (PB) explained, “At the university level, there is practically no formal professional development—we do everything on our own.” Consequently, the lack of institutional infrastructure hinders professional growth. Mahfuzur (PR) asserted, “There is no institutional scope for professional development for university teachers.” Mousumi (PR) observed that new university teachers often begin their roles without structured preparatory training. She noted that “university teachers start without formal pre-service training, relying on brief workshops later, which is insufficient.” Further, the lack of a coordinated PD strategy

persists across HEIs. Ziaur (PB) pointed out, “Unfortunately, there has been no organized attempt to offer professional development and training at the higher education level for ESL teachers.” Some participants recognized the need for department-level ownership of teacher development initiatives in the absence of broader institutional provision. Russel (PB) emphasized, “It would be the responsibility of the English Department of the University to organize their own professional development programs.”

Selim’s (PB) remark underscores a deep sense of professional inadequacy stemming from the absence of foundational pedagogical training. His experience highlights the systemic neglect of ITE and suggests that recruitment practices prioritize academic credentials over teaching competence. This perspective aligns with the views of other participants, suggesting a shared struggle with unprepared entry into teaching roles. Meherun’s (PR) account reinforces the unstructured and informal nature of teacher induction. Her institution’s reliance on peer guidance rather than formal training exemplifies an institutional workaround rather than a sustainable PD approach. This practice again points to systemic gaps in professional preparation and echoes Selim’s concern about entering the field without theoretical grounding. Nargis’s (PB) statement reflects a widespread institutional absence in ongoing teacher development. The emphasis on self-directed learning signals both resilience and neglect: while teachers take initiative, the lack of institutional scaffolding restricts meaningful, sustained improvement. Her experience deepens the critique of PD availability voiced by Meherun (PR) and Selim (PB). Mahfuzur’s (PR) categorical assertion points to an institutional failure to prioritize PD. This near absence of PD suggests a systemic disregard for pedagogical capacity building at the university level and corroborates earlier participant testimonies about the informal, unsupported nature of their

professional growth. Mousumi's (PR) view illustrates the inadequacy of preparatory structures and suggests that the system assumes pedagogical competence without foundational training.

Furthermore, the lack of a coordinated PD strategy persists across HEIs, a concern underscored by Ziaur's (PB) view, which reinforces the notion that PD is not institutionally prioritized. This absence of a systematic approach points to a broader vacuum in policy and planning. In alignment with this perspective, Russel's (PB) view suggests a decentralized solution: departments may need to initiate development efforts themselves when university-wide support is lacking. It underscores the need for internal advocacy and agency.

In this study, the participants consistently identified the absence of structured ITE and institutional PD as critical constraints in their practice. These findings corroborate the literature reviewed, which shows that pre-service teacher training in Bangladesh is rare and non-mandatory, especially for university-level ESL educators (Das, 2021; Nur & Short, 2019). The participants' testimonies reflect these systemic gaps, reinforcing the claim that many ESL educators are recruited based solely on academic credentials, lacking formal pedagogical preparation. The findings align with Fernandes et al. (2023) and Sadeghi and Richards (2021), who argue that teacher development must be continuous and institutionally supported to sustain educational quality. However, participants in my study consistently reported the opposite— isolated, self-managed efforts with no institutional framework, which partially diverges from the global expectations outlined in these sources.

Moreover, the findings partially resonate with MacPhail et al. (2018), who emphasize the need for self-initiated learning and collegial collaboration in higher-education contexts. While self-initiative was evident in participants' responses, collaborative opportunities and structured institutional support appeared absent in the Bangladeshi context, marking a critical deviation.

Unlike the American ESL teacher training examined in Jiao et al. (2023), which is praised for its comprehensive and structured design supporting pedagogical and cultural growth, the situation in Bangladesh reflects minimal formal structure, exposing a developmental gap.

Further, the article by Ali et al. (2023) critiques externally imposed ELT aid approaches like EIA for overlooking structural PD needs in favor of language commodification. This study's findings corroborate my findings, as participants noted the lack of meaningful pedagogical training that addresses their local realities. My study thus extends this critique by offering teacher-centered insights into how institutional failures perpetuate unpreparedness, despite increased national interest in ELT. My study contributes new insights by highlighting the everyday, practical consequences of institutional neglect in ESL teacher preparation at the university level—a topic only briefly touched upon in the literature. These narratives demonstrate that the promise of quality English education remains elusive without foundational training and institutional PD frameworks.

Participants identified a shared concern over the lack of formal training and institutional PD support, revealing a pattern of systemic neglect across higher-education contexts. Their experiences demonstrate that PD needs are about skills acquisition and rectifying foundational gaps in teacher preparation. This absence of structured support underscores broader institutional challenges in sustaining quality ESL instruction in Bangladeshi universities.

2.2 Systemic Need for Contextualized PD in Higher-Education ESL in Bangladesh

The significance and persistent need for PD in education are reflected in teachers' calls for structured, collaborative spaces to exchange knowledge and address instructional challenges. Zabin (PR) remarked, "Professional development is a crying need. ... It is the only platform where teachers share knowledge, solve problems, and understand what they need to grow."

Shaila (PR) highlighted the post-independence shift in pedagogical approaches and the consequent demand for specialized teacher training. She asserted, “After independence in 1971, ESL shifted to CLT, reshaping teaching methods, and creating urgent demand for teacher training in higher education.” Drawing from her classroom experience, Mousumi (PR) underscored the ongoing necessity of regular, structured training to sustain effective teaching practices. She noted, “I have observed from my experience that training is essential for the professional development of university teachers.” Mahmud (PB) also emphasized the critical shortage of pedagogical preparation among language instructors, stating that “most Bangladeshi university ESL teachers lack training in language teaching and need both pre-service and in-service programs, particularly in CLT.” In a similar vein, Hussain (PB) stated that formal qualifications are essential for effective English instruction: “The TESL (Teaching English as a Second Language) qualification is necessary for every teacher to teach English.” Rezaul (PB) explained that constant shifts in the ELT field necessitate continuous professional learning: “Professional development needs are highly important ... because our field is constantly changing.” Highlighting a systemic gap, Kashmira (PR) pointed out the absence of institutional efforts to identify and respond to teachers’ professional growth needs: “The university hardly assesses teachers’ needs.” These accounts collectively highlight a common understanding among educators that ongoing, contextually relevant PD is vital to address the changing instructional demands in Bangladeshi higher education.

Zabin’s (PR) remark highlights the perceived value of PD as a rare yet essential venue for professional exchange and reflective growth. It underscores how PD functions not only as training but also as a collective knowledge-sharing mechanism. Zabin’s (PR) emphasis on PD as the “only platform” suggests a lack of institutional avenues for collegial engagement, resonating

with broader concerns expressed by others. Shaila (PR) highlighted the post-independence shift in pedagogical approaches and the consequent demand for specialized teacher training. Her observation identifies a historically rooted pedagogical transformation that directly created a structural need for teacher education reform. Shaila's (PR) quote points to a specific systemic change—the adoption of CLT—that redefined instructional practices and exposed a critical training gap at the university level. It also adds a diachronic dimension to Zabin's (PR) call, indicating how institutional changes have long-term implications for PD needs.

Drawing from her classroom experience, Mousumi underscored the necessity of regular, structured training for sustaining effective teaching practices. Her commentary reinforces Zabin's (PR) and Shaila's (PR) views by emphasizing the enduring importance of teacher training from a practical standpoint. In contrast to Zabin's (PR) structural view and Shaila's (PR) historical framing, Mousumi (PR) offers a grounded, experiential perspective, pointing to PD as integral to maintaining quality teaching rather than merely adapting to change. Mahmud's (PB) focus on CLT highlights a specific pedagogical gap. It adds a dimension of methodological urgency to the broader PD deficiency cited by other participants.

Zabin's (PR) emphasis on PD as a “crying need” illustrates the lack of institutionalized, collaborative spaces for ESL faculty, revealing a critical gap in ongoing professional engagement. Her view aligns with Mousumi's (PR) experiential claim that PD sustains effective teaching, indicating shared recognition of PD as indispensable rather than optional. Shaila (PR), meanwhile, connects the institutional demand for PD to a historic curricular shift, reinforcing the view that broader systemic changes have made structured training essential. Collectively, these respondents point to PD not as an isolated activity but as a necessary institutional response to evolving pedagogical contexts.

In support of these shared insights, Hussain (PB) stated that formal qualifications are essential for effective English instruction. His view reinforces the idea that content knowledge alone is inadequate; formal, specialized credentials are viewed as a prerequisite for effective ESL teaching at the university level. Rezaul (PB) explained that constant shifts in the ELT field necessitate continuous professional learning. He articulates a core rationale for PD: the dynamic nature of the ELT field. His comment supports the broader consensus that static training is not enough; adaptability through ongoing PD is necessary. Highlighting a systemic gap, Kashmira (PR) pointed out the absence of institutional efforts to identify and respond to teachers' professional growth needs. Kashmira's (PR) observation draws attention to the lack of institutional needs analysis, revealing a structural weakness that prevents tailored PD provision. Her view aligns with others who see PD as underprioritized at the policy level.

These accounts collectively highlight a shared understanding among educators that ongoing, contextually relevant PD is vital to address the changing instructional demands in Bangladeshi higher education. The participants' perspectives reflect both individual awareness and systemic concern, pointing to an urgent need for institutional structures that prioritize and sustain teacher growth.

My study's findings are aligned with the broader literature, indicating that PD is central to sustaining pedagogical effectiveness in ESL education. Rahman et al. (2018) highlight a significant mismatch between teachers' pedagogical beliefs and classroom practices due to limited professional support, mirroring Zabin (PR) and Mousumi's (PR) concerns about the lack of formal training infrastructure. The participants' views also align with literature documenting the failure to provide adequate CLT-oriented training following the curricular shift post-1971 (Rahman & Pandian, 2018). Shaila's (PR) account, for instance, corresponds directly with

Rahman and Pandian's (2018) observation that the adoption of CLT in Bangladesh lacked simultaneous investment in teacher capacity-building. Moreover, the literature confirms that the absence of clear, regular, and contextualized training has impeded CLT implementation (Rahman et al., 2018a), supporting Mousumi's emphasis on the need for regular training.

Building on these ideas, my study further reveals that ESL teachers described a lack of structured pre-service and in-service training as a critical professional and institutional shortcoming. This finding aligns with the literature, particularly with Fernandes et al. (2023), who emphasize that pedagogical training is crucial in shaping university educators' teaching practices and professional identities. Like Fernandes' findings, my participants see PD as transformative but currently underdeveloped in Bangladesh. The findings also align closely with Das (2021) and Nur and Short (2019), cited earlier in the literature review, who observe that most Bangladeshi teachers enter classrooms without any formal ITE, and that such absence contributes to reliance on traditional, ineffective teaching methods like lecture-based delivery.

Extending this discussion, it is important to note that while most existing research focuses on secondary education in Bangladesh, my study extends these concerns to the more under-explored terrain of higher-education ESL instruction, especially in university education, also noted as a gap in the literature review. The study by Rahman and Pandian (2018) did not include higher-education institutions in their investigation, indicating an opening for my study to begin to address. Unlike secondary settings where donor-led interventions such as EIA have introduced teacher training (albeit unevenly), the higher-education context remains under-resourced and unstructured. This lack of attention to university-level PD underscores a critical oversight in both policy and practice, particularly for ESL teaching. This institutional oversight becomes even more significant when viewed through the lens of the study's central inquiry. Specifically, the

findings address Research Question 2—“What specific PD needs do university ESL teachers in Bangladesh identify, and how do these needs reflect broader institutional and instructional challenges?”—by demonstrating that the absence of structured and contextualized PD is both a teacher-identified need and a manifestation of systemic institutional neglect.

Together, the participants’ reflections reveal a consensus around the inadequacy of current PD provisions for university ESL teachers in Bangladesh. PD is viewed as essential for collaborative problem-solving (Zabin), historically mandated by pedagogical shifts (Shaila), and practically necessary for effective teaching (Mousumi). These findings suggest that PD needs are deeply rooted in systemic, historical, and practical challenges, reinforcing the call for regular, structured, and context-specific training programs in higher education in Bangladesh.

The perspectives of ESL teachers from both private and public universities in Bangladesh revealed notable areas of convergence as well as divergence regarding teacher preparation and institutional support. Both groups emphasized the absence of structured pre-service training and institutionalized PD, indicating a shared experience of unprepared entry into teaching roles and reliance on informal, often self-directed learning. Selim (PB) remarked, “Everyone becomes a teacher without training,” a sentiment echoed by Meherun (PR), who stated, “I did not receive any training ... the department used to assign us with some senior teachers.” The parallel expressed by this participant underscores a systemic neglect across institutional types. Similarly, both PR and PB participants critiqued the lack of organized PD infrastructure. As Mahfuzur (PR) noted, “There is no institutional scope for professional development,” while Ziaur (PB) confirmed, “No organized attempt to offer professional development ... for ESL teachers.”

However, divergences emerged in perceptions of departmental supports. PR participants, such as Kashmira, highlighted an institutional disregard for assessing teacher needs, observing,

“The university hardly assesses teachers’ needs,” while PB voices like Russel proposed that departmental leadership could compensate for institutional neglect: “It would be the responsibility of English Department ... to organize their own professional development programs.” This reflects subtle differences in how each institutional context distributes responsibility for PD—PR participants leaned toward critique of administrative inertia, whereas some PB participants emphasized potential for departmental initiative.

Moreover, the need for contextualized, CLT-oriented training was stressed across both groups, with Mahmud (PB) pointing to a specific pedagogical deficit: “Most ... ESL teachers lack training ... particularly in CLT,” and Shaila (PR) linking the CLT shift to a historical rupture necessitating new training paradigms. No significant differences were observed between PR and PB participants in relation to the perceived importance of PD as collaborative knowledge-sharing spaces, as seen in Zabin’s (PR) assertion that PD is “the only platform where teachers share knowledge, solve problems, and understand what they need to grow.” Overall, these findings reflect a context-bound consensus on the inadequacies of current PD provisions in higher-education ESL, shaped by differing institutional cultures but underpinned by shared systemic constraints.

Theme 3: Quality of English Teachers

This section addresses the systemic and institutional barriers impeding the PD of English teachers in Bangladeshi universities. The discussion of findings in this section explores how deficiencies in teacher preparation, entrenched reliance on outdated grammar-focused methodologies, and the marginalization of structured, sustainable PD initiatives collectively obstruct the advancement of instructional quality. Furthermore, it discusses how institutional priorities—favoring administrative outputs over pedagogical excellence—and hierarchical

governance structures exacerbate these challenges. The two sub-themes and associated codes identified while analyzing the data are presented in Table 8.

Table 8

Summary Table of Subthemes and Codes for Theme 3: Quality of English Teachers

Subtheme 3.1 Systemic Teacher Development Gaps Obstruct Quality English Education	Frequency
3.1.1 Teacher preparedness deficiencies	High
3.1.2 Poor teaching quality	High
3.1.3 Inadequate PD	High
3.1.4. Grammar-focused instructional methods	Medium
3.1.5. Shortage of qualified trainers and managers	Medium
Subtheme 3.2 Institutional Priorities Undermine ESL Teachers' PD	
3.2.1 Institutional assumptions about teacher expertise	High
3.2.2 Administrative priorities favor publications over PD	High
3.2.3 Absence of structured, teaching-focused PD initiatives	High
3.2.4 Hierarchical constraints limiting professional autonomy	Medium

3.1 Systemic Teacher Development Gaps Obstruct Quality English Education

It was commonly noted among participants that the advancement of quality English education in Bangladesh is critically obstructed by systemic shortcomings in teacher preparedness, persistent deficiencies in teaching quality and materials, inadequate PD, and reliance on outdated, grammar-focused instructional approaches. Mahfuzur (PR) identified teacher preparedness as a central barrier to effective English instruction, remarking, “While some senior scholars claim communicative English has failed in Bangladesh, I believe the real issue is the lack of trained, proficient English teachers, even at the university level.” Shaila (PR) similarly highlighted the limitations in teaching quality by stating, “Low English teacher quality obstructs learning, emphasizing the urgent need for sustainable professional development.” Ziaur (PR) addressed systemic deficiencies undermining the growing demand for English education, explaining, “Quality English education in Bangladesh faces a persistent supply-demand gap due to insufficient teachers, materials, and training.” Russel (PB) critiqued the prevailing

instructional approach, noting, “Teachers rely on grammar-focused lecturing, lacking communicative English teaching methods.” Zabin (PR) pointed out the broader shortage of qualified trainers and managers necessary for effective PD, stating, “We do not have many experienced trainers, training managers and teachers.”

Institutional and disciplinary tensions were seen as contributing to systemic inefficiencies in teacher qualifications. According to Mahmud (PB), “There is a kind of tension between literature and ELT in the country, as most people joining universities as ESL teachers hold degrees in literature but lack proper training.” The shortage of qualified, reputable teachers was explicitly acknowledged as an ongoing challenge. Rezaul (PB) observed, “We do not have experienced teachers or reputed teachers ... we need more.” In response to the interview question regarding the adequacy of human resources for supporting ESL TPD, participants revealed that systemic deficiencies in teacher preparedness, instructional quality, and access to sustainable development opportunities continue to obstruct efforts to meet the growing demands of English instruction in higher education.

Mahfuzur’s (PR) emphasis on inadequate teacher training directly spotlights systemic faults in human-resource preparation. His observation aligns with others by underlining the foundational issue: pedagogical innovation becomes futile without competent teachers. Shaila’s (PR) remarks reinforce Mahfuzur’s (PR) view but extend it further, insisting that the solution is not short-term but requires sustainable professional growth initiatives. This perspective highlights a critical need for continuity in teacher capacity building, not one-off interventions. Ziaur (PR) draws attention to structural inadequacies beyond individual teachers, linking quality education to broader systemic resource allocation issues. His view connects teacher shortages, poor materials, and training gaps into a cycle impeding progress. Russel (PB) highlights the

methodological inertia in Bangladesh's ESL landscape, where outdated grammar-based instruction persists, undermining communicative competence goals. His view complements Mahfuzur's (PR) focus on training, suggesting that the lack of methodological innovation is symptomatic of poor teacher preparation. Zabin's (PR) statement shifts attention from classroom-level deficiencies to a systemic shortage of PD infrastructure itself. This situation reflects a multilayered problem: even if teachers seek PD opportunities, there are insufficient qualified personnel to facilitate them.

Findings generated in this study illuminate critical PD needs among university ESL teachers in Bangladesh. Specifically, participants pinpoint deficits in teacher preparation, the dominance of grammar-focused methodologies, and the absence of a sustainable PD infrastructure as major barriers. In this study, findings align substantially with Afroz et al. (2024), who reported that while Bangladesh has initiated several CPD projects, they are fragmented, non-comprehensive, and fail to ensure sustained teacher improvement. Similarly, Nur and Short (2019) discussed that teacher training initiatives often lack needs-based analysis and remain ineffective. Moreover, Wilson (2021) underscored the low morale and lack of preparation among teacher educators, further resonating with my participants' concerns about inadequate trainers. However, while Abeywickrama (2021) showed positive impacts of PD initiatives on ESL teacher quality in Sri Lanka, this study's findings suggest that similar systematic PD effectiveness is not yet evident in Bangladesh. My study adds new insights by exposing not only the scarcity of PD but also the inadequacy of PD providers themselves—a result less emphasized in existing literature.

Bringing together the participants' views reveals consistent patterns highlighting both specific PD needs and broader institutional challenges. Participants identified the need for

rigorous teacher training, enhanced skills in communicative methodologies, access to sustainable professional learning and development opportunities, and the availability of competent English language teacher educators and PD facilitators as crucial areas for improvement. At the institutional level, the findings reflect systemic underinvestment in teacher development, a continued reliance on outdated, grammar-focused instructional approaches, and a lack of professional ecosystems capable of supporting ongoing teacher growth. Together, these insights underscore the interconnection between individual teacher needs and structural educational deficiencies within the higher-education sector in Bangladesh.

3.2 Institutional Priorities Undermine ESL Teachers' PD

Many participants emphasized that entrenched institutional assumptions, administrative priorities misaligned with pedagogical development, hierarchical constraints, and the absence of structured teaching-focused initiatives critically undermine ESL university teachers' opportunities for meaningful professional growth. Selim (PB) observed that common assumptions about university teachers' expertise obscure concerns about teaching quality, explaining, "Everyone thinks a university teacher knows a lot, so there's no problem about the quality of teaching." Shaila (PR) articulated the problem of misplaced institutional priorities that favor administrative outputs over genuine PD support, commenting, "The university prioritizes publication for promotion over supporting teachers with dedicated ESL professional development." Tanvir (PR) revealed that excessive hierarchical control stifled his professional autonomy and development, sharing, "I faced intense hierarchical control, with authorities demanding unquestioning compliance." Finally, Mousumi (PR) emphasized her university's lack of structured, teaching-focused PD initiatives, noting, "The university prioritizes publications

and overseas degrees over teaching development, lacking clear PD criteria and relying on student satisfaction.”

Addressing the difficulties faced by ESL teachers in pursuing development, participants highlighted institutional structures that deprioritize teaching-focused advancement in favor of administrative mandates. Ziaur (PB) underscored the burdens placed on faculty that hinder PD engagement, stating, “We are expected to manage teaching, academic responsibilities, administrative duties, and student advising, alongside publishing research articles for promotion, reflecting the administration’s primary institutional priority.” Hussain (PB) pointed out that excessive workload fundamentally impedes development opportunities, explaining, “Assigned workload ... does not give enough opportunity to work on professional development.” In response to the interview question concerning the potential difficulties novice and experienced ESL teachers might encounter in promoting their professional growth, participants revealed that the PD of both novice and experienced ESL teachers is substantially constrained by institutional factors that deprioritize teaching development.

Selim (PB) observed that common assumptions about university teachers’ expertise obscure concerns about teaching quality, leading to the neglect of efforts to improve it. His view suggests that institutional complacency around teaching competence undermines meaningful evaluation or support for PD, resonating with broader participant frustrations about institutional disregard for pedagogical improvement. While acknowledging that publication can contribute to PD, Shaila’s (PR) statement highlights a systemic preference for it over teaching enhancement, indicating a disconnect between institutional reward structures and teachers’ broader PD needs. This view strengthens the pattern that participants see administrative priorities as impediments to professional growth. Tanvir’s (PR) experience illustrates how rigid hierarchies suppress

teachers' agency and discourage critical engagement with PD. His account aligns with others' emphasis on structural constraints as a significant barrier to effective PD. Mousumi's (PR) comment highlights the absence of systemic PD structures focused on teaching, reflecting institutional reliance on superficial metrics like student satisfaction instead of substantive development initiatives. This reinforces the consensus that structured, teaching-oriented PD is critically lacking.

In this study, participants identified specific PD needs—structured pedagogical development, professional autonomy, and institutionally supported teaching excellence—that are largely unmet due to broader institutional and instructional challenges. The findings suggest that entrenched assumptions, administrative preferences for research output, hierarchical constraints, and unstructured or absent PD initiatives inhibit ESL teachers' professional growth in Bangladeshi universities.

Comparatively, existing literature corroborates these study's findings. Alam and Parvin (2017) emphasized that the commodification of higher education in Bangladesh prioritizes market-driven outputs such as publication over genuine educational quality. Similarly, Barua and Uddin (2016) and Kabir and Chowdhury (2021) reported a pervasive lack of research support, teaching development infrastructure, and effective governance in private universities. Kabir and Chowdhury (2021) further highlighted how financial constraints prevent many institutions from hiring qualified full-time faculty, thereby exacerbating quality concerns. These scholars' results align with my findings regarding misplaced institutional priorities and deficient PD structures. Kader and Salam (2019) also confirmed that although service delivery in private universities is expanding, the quality of teaching and professional support remains a critical concern.

It is important to note however, that this study extends these insights by illustrating how hierarchical control directly constrains individual agency in professional learning—an aspect less prominently discussed in the reviewed studies. Notably, while the literature often addresses infrastructure gaps and governance issues broadly, it tends to overlook the nuanced, teacher-level impacts of institutional assumptions about expertise and the operational consequences of rigid academic hierarchies. Moreover, the articles analyzed do not specifically discuss ESL PD needs in higher education in Bangladesh, thus highlighting the unique contribution of my study. By directly linking PD challenges to institutional assumptions and administrative hierarchies, the present data provides a more granular understanding of the barriers ESL educators face.

Thus, while this study's findings align with broader critiques of institutional priorities and governance inefficiencies, they diverge by explicitly foregrounding the internalized institutional cultures and systemic neglect of structured, ESL-specific PD initiatives. The findings thereby add to the literature a finer-grained analysis of how these systemic factors shape individual teachers' experiences and PD trajectories.

The participants' accounts together illustrate that ESL university teachers in Bangladesh identify critical PD needs centered on structured, teaching-focused initiatives, professional autonomy, and institutional recognition of pedagogical quality. Entrenched assumptions about teacher expertise, administrative priorities skewed towards research, hierarchical governance, and the absence of systematic PD frameworks collectively constrain these needs. This current study contributes new insights by demonstrating how these institutional and instructional challenges are not only systemic but deeply internalized at the teacher level, thereby complicating efforts to promote meaningful professional growth.

Addressing these deeply embedded challenges necessitates a rethinking of institutional values and priorities. Achieving systemic change in organizational culture within higher education requires multilevel efforts that synchronize policy reforms, leadership approaches, and professional growth with institutional values. In Bangladesh, fostering a culture of quality and innovation involves shifting from a management focused solely on compliance to one willing to incorporate practices that are reflective, collaborative, and centered on learning (Rahnuma, 2020; UGC, 2018). This process includes integrating quality-assurance frameworks, empowering faculty through professional learning communities, and aligning incentives with pedagogical excellence (Cross et al., 2022; Parvin, 2019). Globally, models of cultural transformation emphasize the need for consistent leadership commitment, distributed change initiatives, and intentional disruption of ingrained norms (Gedifew & Muluneh, 2022; Kezar, 2018). Therefore, systemic cultural change is not driven by isolated events but develops through deliberate, coordinated actions across different institutional levels.

These theoretical imperatives were reflected in participants' lived realities across both public and private institutions. Both PR and PB teacher participants expressed shared concerns about inadequate teacher preparation, institutional neglect of PD, and the dominance of grammar-focused instruction in ESL classrooms. For instance, Mahfuzur (PR) and Mahmud (PB) both underscored the lack of pedagogical training among university ESL teachers, with Mahmud (PB) noting that "most people joining universities as ESL teachers hold degrees in literature but lack proper training." Similarly, Russel (PB) and Shaila (PR) identified outdated instructional practices and insufficient development support as key barriers, with Shaila asserting that "low English teacher quality obstructs learning."

However, important points of divergence between ELT from private and public institutions also emerged. PR participants more frequently critiqued rigid administrative hierarchies and the prioritization of publication over teaching improvement. Tanvir (PR), for example, reported experiencing “intense hierarchical control,” while Shaila (PR) emphasized that universities “prioritize publication for promotion over supporting teachers.” In contrast, PB participants more commonly highlighted excessive workload and institutional complacency as primary barriers. Ziaur (PB) noted the challenge of balancing multiple roles, stating, “We are expected to manage teaching, academic responsibilities, administrative duties, and student advising,” while Selim (PB) pointed out that assumptions about teacher competence led to overlooked quality concerns. No significant differences were observed between PR and PB participants in relation to the perceived scarcity of structured, teaching-focused PD. These comparative insights reflect the context-specific institutional cultures of PR and PB settings, revealing both converging frustrations and divergent institutional dynamics that shape ESL teachers’ professional experiences in Bangladesh.

Theme 4: Professional Development Approaches

The theme related to professional development approaches foregrounds both collaborative and self-directed approaches as viable, contextually adaptive strategies for navigating institutional and cultural constraints in Bangladesh’s higher education. Definitions for various professional development approaches can be found in Table 9 below. When commenting on these PD approaches during interviews, teachers underscored mentorship, peer collaboration, teacher support groups, and professional learning communities as vital yet underutilized avenues for sustained PD. The thematic categories and corresponding codes that emerged from this analysis are presented in Table 10.

Table 9*Definitions of Professional Development Approaches*

Approach	Definition
Workshops	A workshop is a focused, short-term learning experience designed to equip participants with specific knowledge and pedagogies through practical, hands-on activities (Hamilton, 2024; Radić-Bojanić & Pop-Jovanov, 2018; Richards & Farrell, 2005).
Self-monitoring	Self-monitoring is a reflective practice that enables teachers to systematically observe, evaluate, and adjust their practices to enhance their teaching effectiveness and classroom performance through greater self-awareness and control (Layden et al., 2022; Richards & Farrell, 2005).
Teacher support groups	The teacher support group provides a space for educators to engage in peer collaboration, discuss pedagogical challenges, and exchange professional insights (Richards & Farrell, 2005; Tseng et al., 2014).
Teaching journals	A teaching journal is a reflective tool for educators to document and analyze teaching experiences, challenges, and insights. It is an ongoing record of planning for learning, teaching practices, and critical reflections, serving to foster professional growth and improve teaching competencies (Richards & Farrell, 2005; Wang, 2021).
Peer observation	Peer observation, widely promoted in higher education, is a collaborative, reflective process where novice and experienced educators observe each other to provide feedback aimed to enhance instructional practices, support professional growth, and foster idea-sharing (Fletcher, 2018; O’Leary & Price, 2016; Richards & Farrell, 2005).
Teaching portfolios	A teaching portfolio is an evidence-based collection of documents and artifacts showcasing teaching philosophy, pedagogy, and performance; it supports self-appraisal, professional growth, and reflective practice (Hamilton, 2018; Richards & Farrell, 2005).
Critical incident analysis	Critical incident analysis is a reflection method where educators examine challenging classroom events to improve their teaching. The process involves analyzing what happened, why, and how to respond differently in the future. This approach fosters professional growth and may employ tools like journals, peer discussions, and focus groups (Harrison & Lee, 2011; Lithoxidou & Papadopoulou, 2024; Megawati et al., 2020; Richards & Farrell, 2005).
Case study analysis	Case study analysis is a thorough examination of an authentic, specific teaching scenario by teachers. Teachers work together to apply critical thinking, professional knowledge, and problem solving to make decisions to address each case (Helleve et al., 2023; Richards & Farrell, 2005).
Peer coaching	Peer coaching is a collaborative, reflective process where colleagues support teaching improvement through planning, observation, and feedback, fostering professional growth while respecting each other’s autonomy (Cassella & Taylor, 2019; Richards & Farrell, 2005).
Team teaching	Team teaching involves shared planning, implementation, and assessment of students by educators, fostering collaborative learning, interdisciplinary

	teaching, and addressing diverse educational needs through various innovative co-teaching approaches (Minett-Smith & Davis, 2019; Richards & Farrell, 2005).
Teacher action research	Teacher action research is a cyclical inquiry process or self-study research. The teacher first identifies a teaching dilemma and then researches evidence-based pedagogical solutions. New action strategies are trialed in the classroom while impacts on students' learning are monitored (Burns & Dikilitaş, 2025; Küsel & Markic, 2022; Richards & Farrell, 2005).
Mentoring	Mentoring in teacher education is a structured, interpersonal process where experienced teachers support mentees' pedagogical growth, professional identity, and integration through reflective dialogue, mutual learning, and shared inquiry, fostering reciprocal development beyond technical supervision (Connolly, 2018; Richards & Farrell, 2005; Szymańska-Tworek, 2022).
Guided participation	Guided participation is a socio-cultural process where novices engage in meaningful activities with more experienced members, who structure, support, and gradually transfer responsibility to the learner through dialogue, modelling, and shared practice (Carpenter et al., 2015; Mascolo, 2009).

Table 10

Summary Table of Subthemes and Codes for Theme 4: Professional Development Approaches

Subtheme 4.1 Teacher Development Approaches: Perceptions, Constraints, and Contextual Applications	Frequency
4.1.1 Mentoring	High
4.1.2 Workshops	High
4.1.3 Self-monitoring	High
4.1.4. Teacher support groups	Medium
4.1.5. Team teaching	Medium
4.1.6 Action research	Medium
4.1.7 Teaching portfolios	Low
4.1.8 Peer observation	Low
Subtheme 4.2 Contextual Gap and Western Dependence in ESL PD	
4.2.1 Lack of local PD frameworks	High
4.2.2 Dependence on Western approaches	High
4.2.3 Institutional inertia	High
4.2.4 Individual initiative	High
4.2.5 Institutional quality assurance cell (IQAC) limitations	Medium

4.1 Teacher Development Approaches: Perceptions, Constraints, and Contextual Applications

All participants acknowledged the relevance and value of the 11 PD approaches discussed by Richards and Farrell (2005), although their emphasis on specific approaches varied based on contextual factors and individual professional experiences. In response to the interview

question “Do you feel that the ideas of teacher development groups, mentoring, guided participation, workshops, self-monitoring, teacher support groups, keeping a teaching journal, peer observation, teaching portfolios, team teaching, and action research can impact changes in your professional learning and growth?” participants clearly affirmed that many of these 11 approaches positively influenced their PD. However, the degree of impact varied, shaped by organizational limitations, cultural contexts, and individual learning preferences.

To illustrate, Mahmud (PB) emphasized the value of the PD approaches, though he acknowledged institutional and cultural constraints in implementation: “I support all these PD approaches in theory and practice, having volunteered in mentoring, workshops, and conferences—experiences that benefited me, though institutional implementation, like team teaching, remains limited and culturally challenging in our context.” Mousumi (PR) elaborated on her extensive engagement with a wide range of PD strategies across both training and academic contexts: “I have found mentoring, workshops, development groups, and self-monitoring indispensable. In teacher training, I also experienced support groups, peer observation, portfolios, and team teaching. Most of my publications are grounded in this principle: action research.” Jesmin (PR) underscored the importance of collaborative and reflective practices for teacher development: “I value all the approaches, particularly team teaching, especially with native and non-native speakers co-teaching. Self-monitoring and workshops or seminars are also crucial. Teacher support groups—currently lacking in Bangladesh—could promote departmental collaboration and reciprocal learning.”

Other participants echoed this sentiment with comparable concerns and highlighted further nuances in PD engagement and institutional support. Rezaul (PB) pointed out that although he supports several core PD strategies, including mentoring and reflective practices,

institutional adoption is inconsistent: “I believe maintaining a portfolio, reflective journal, mentoring, and team teaching are essential for professional growth, but consistent implementation remains rare and irregular.” Meherun (PR) noted the professional benefits of PD activities, while also highlighting institutional constraints on certain approaches: “I believe these activities aid professional growth; I practice self-monitoring, though institutional limits restrict peer observation and team teaching, which I still find valuable.” Muntasir (PR) stated that while all 11 PD approaches are potentially effective, individual applicability may vary based on teachers’ learning preferences: “I believe all 11 PD approaches have potential for functional development, but not all suit every teacher, as learning preferences vary—some may benefit more from workshops, self-monitoring, teaching journals, peer observation, or support groups.” Selim (PB) revealed a lack of availability despite personal efforts to engage in PD, stating, “Since beginning teaching, I have rarely found many types of professional development approaches, despite actively seeking workshops and activities to support my growth.” Nargis (PB) further elucidated the gap between PD ideals and implementation, asserting, “Ideally, activities like mentoring, supervision, team teaching, journaling, and portfolio development are essential for professional growth, yet they are rarely implemented consistently despite their known benefits.”

Mahmud’s (PB) account highlights the difference between teachers’ personal preference for PD and systemic limitations for teachers to learn in preferred ways. His engagement with mentoring and workshops affirms the practical viability of these PD forms, but he signals that institutional and cultural barriers restrict comprehensive implementation. This tension echoes throughout other participants’ comments about their PD experiences. Mousumi’s (PR) extensive engagement illustrates the multifaceted nature of PD when embedded within institutional and

training frameworks. Her reference to action research as foundational to her academic output underscores the role of reflective and inquiry-based practices in academic identity formation. Jesmin (PR) emphasizes collaborative PD, lamenting the absence of structural mechanisms such as teacher support groups. Her emphasis on intercultural co-teaching introduces a dimension of global pedagogical interaction, linking PD to cross-linguistic and cross-cultural PD. Rezaul (PB) affirms the theoretical relevance of reflective and collaborative approaches but problematizes their sporadic and unsustained execution, highlighting institutional inconsistency as a barrier to meaningful PD uptake. Meherun (PR) exemplifies the practical application of self-directed PD while noting that institutional inertia hinders broader collaborative strategies. Muntasir's (PR) perspective introduces individual learner variability as a determining factor in PD effectiveness, reinforcing the need for flexible, differentiated PD approaches. This highlights the need for flexible, teacher-responsive PD approaches that accommodate diverse professional needs.

In contrast, the subsequent accounts foreground the issue of access and institutional support. Selim (PB) revealed a limited availability of PD despite actively seeking it since the start of his teaching career. Selim's comment underscores a systemic scarcity of accessible PD opportunities. His persistent efforts to locate such resources point to a disconnect between individual motivation and institutional provision, reinforcing the urgent need for expanded PD infrastructure. Nargis (PB) further elucidated the disconnect between PD ideals and their actual implementation. He reaffirms the widespread perception that effective PD strategies are acknowledged in principle but not systematically applied. His critique encapsulates a recurring theme across participants: institutional neglect of sustained and structured PD provision.

In the current study, participants recognized the merit of a wide range of PD strategies, yet systemic, cultural, and contextual constraints remain critical barriers. These findings partially

align with Richards and Farrell (2005), who advocate for varied PD approaches, but in the Bangladeshi context, the translation of these approaches into practice is often undermined by institutional inertia, as also indicated by Afroz et al. (2024) and Cross et al. (2022). The expressed need for formal mentoring programs, teacher support groups, and team teaching aligns with the collaborative PD approaches suggested in Díaz-Sacco and Muñoz-Salinas (2024), though such approaches remain underutilized in Bangladesh due to a lack of policy, resources, and administrative support. This divergence is especially notable compared to practices in other higher-education contexts where institutionalized peer collaboration and reflection are routine (Minett-Smith & Davis, 2019; Tseng et al., 2016).

Moreover, while tools such as teaching journals, teacher action research, and self-monitoring were acknowledged as effective, their application remains largely informal and self-driven, resonating with findings shared by Kurniati et al. (2023) and Layden et al. (2022). The fragmented and voluntary nature of these practices indicates a lack of systemic integration in higher-education PD policy and programming initiatives. The absence of structured peer observation, despite its pedagogical value (Sharmin & Uddin, 2024), reflects institutional neglect of formative, peer-led evaluation. My study suggests that peer observation, when available, is inconsistently applied, a trend also noted in the literature (Sharmin & Uddin, 2024), highlighting a missed opportunity for professional collaboration and potentially improved practice. Therefore, the findings of my study both align with and extend current literature by documenting how institutional and instructional challenges in Bangladesh shape and sometimes inhibit the implementation of sound PD practices suggested in the literature.

University ESL teachers in Bangladesh identify mentoring, workshops, self-monitoring, team teaching, teaching journals, and action research as key PD needs. However, institutional

inconsistencies, cultural norms, and limited systemic support constrain their ability to engage with these practices. Participants emphasized collaborative and reflective practices but noted their underutilization due to infrastructural gaps. The findings address Research Question 5—“Which PD initiatives are ESL teachers engaged in within Bangladeshi universities?”—by demonstrating that ESL teachers actively engage in a diverse range of PD initiatives, including mentoring, workshops, self-monitoring, action research, team teaching, and the use of teaching journals, yet the accessibility and effectiveness of these programs are significantly mediated by institutional variability, lack of administrative support, and socio-cultural constraints, which collectively hinder the systematic and sustained implementation of these otherwise valued practices.

These findings confirm that while the research evidence for comprehensive PD exists, practical realization is uneven in the Bangladeshi higher-education context. This finding underscores the urgent need for more institutionalized, culturally responsive, and differentiated PD structures tailored to individual and contextual variability. My study contributes new insights into the micro-level experiences of ESL educators in Bangladesh, revealing the persistent mismatch between teachers’ PD ideals and institutional realities of their workplaces.

4.2 Contextual Gap and Western Dependence in ESL PD

Participants indicated that PD for university-level ESL teachers in Bangladesh is often unstructured and inadequately contextualized, with an overreliance on Western-based frameworks—such as those outlined in Richards and Farrell (2005)—without parallel consideration or provision of non-Western or locally grounded alternatives. Moreover, PD initiatives tend to be driven more by individual teacher motivation than by coherent institutional support. Mahmud (PB) remarked on the absence of a culturally grounded or structured approach

for ESL teachers, stating, “I believe we lack structured, culturally relevant professional development approaches—we have neither Western nor local. However, UGC offers little reflective support for ESL teachers through IQAC, a recent project.” Russel (PB) pointed out the reliance on foreign paradigms, observing, “I must admit there is no locally developed PD approach in Bangladesh; instead, we follow Western approaches that often misalign culturally, relying on foreign curricula and seminars, which undermines context-specific professional development in English language teaching.” Jesmin (PR) highlighted the lack of domestic training programs and the reliance on international sources, revealing, “I have not seen any significant language teacher training programs in Bangladesh; most opportunities I found were abroad. Language teaching is still emerging here, often aimed at supporting weaker students in English-medium university settings.”

Tanjila (PR) commented on the practical limitations of Western initiatives in local classrooms, explaining, “I have attended a few workshops in Bangladesh, mostly Western, which are hard to apply in large, under-resourced classrooms where group work is time-consuming and often ineffective.” In contrast, Hussain (PB) emphasized the role of individual initiative in the absence of institutional frameworks, stating, “I believe professional development is locally driven and self-motivated, as effective teachers often thrive through personal efforts despite limited institutional support or formal recognition.” Ziaur (PB) noted the limited influence of central regulatory bodies, stating, “I see the University Grants Commission (UGC) of Bangladesh as the apex body, yet its influence is limited due to universities’ autonomy.” Tanvir (PR) elaborated on the ineffectiveness of mandated initiatives, explaining, “I am unsure of any local or Western PD approach, but IQAC-led training, though mandated, often lacked skilled facilitators, leading to disengagement, and little effect on ESL teaching or genuine pedagogical

improvement.” He acknowledged, however, that “while its directives are often unimplemented, its recent push for outcome-based curricula via the IQAC was impactful.” These responses to the interview question “If you have any existing PD approaches for the university ESL teachers, is it a ‘Western’ or a ‘local’ PD approach? If you already have an approach, how well does it fit the Bangladeshi EFL context?” underscore that PD for English language university instructors in Bangladesh remains unstructured, predominantly Western in origin, and frequently misaligned with local teaching conditions.

The participants noted that ESL teacher PD in Bangladesh is inadequately structured, lacks contextually appropriate approaches, and relies more on individual than institutional engagement. Mahmud (PB) reflected on these shortcomings, underscoring a systemic vacuum in contextually responsive PD infrastructure in Bangladesh. His observation aligns with Russell’s (PB), who critiqued the dependence on foreign paradigms. Both responses suggest that imported approaches often fail to address the specific socio-pedagogical realities of Bangladeshi classrooms. Jesmin (PR) reinforced this concern, noting the scarcity of domestic training opportunities. Her remarks reflect a shared sentiment of underdevelopment in national PD provision for ESL. Tanjila (PR) added a practical dimension, highlighting the inapplicability of Western training, which illustrates a key misalignment between imported content and actual classroom constraints.

In the absence of structured institutional support, Hussain (PB) highlighted the reliance on teacher autonomy, pointing to a culture of informal, teacher-led PD. This sentiment is echoed in Ziaur’s (PB) critique of the UGC. The perceived ineffectiveness of top-down mandates was evident in Tanvir’s remarks on the institutional quality assurance cell (IQAC)-led training. The UGC of Bangladesh implemented the IQAC as part of its 2009 initiative to improve higher

education standards in both public and private universities in Bangladesh (Chowdhury et al., 2023; UGC, 2018). Although Tanvir acknowledged a recent shift towards outcome-based curricula, its broader pedagogical impact was described as minimal. The findings address Research Question 4—“How do ESL teachers view the influence of their teaching context and personal beliefs on shaping effective PD programs?”—by demonstrating that teachers perceive the inadequacy of institutional support and the misalignment of foreign approaches as central obstacles, which in turn compel them to rely on personal beliefs, contextual understanding, and self-initiated practices to undertake PD in ways that are more responsive to their classroom realities.

These quotations illustrate a pattern of structural inadequacy in ESL PD offerings for teachers in Bangladeshi universities, marked by the absence of localized initiatives and ineffective institutional interventions. Participants commonly noted the inapplicability of Western approaches, the lack of local alternatives, and the resulting dependence on personal motivation. These observations by the teachers participating in this study indicate a systemic failure to contextualize PD within Bangladeshi educational realities, especially in ESL teaching. The emphasis on self-driven development reflects an adaptive response to institutional neglect.

The findings resulting from this study confirm that university ESL teachers in Bangladesh experience PD as fragmented, contextually irrelevant, and institutionally unsupported. These findings reflect similar findings offered by MacPhail et al. (2019), who reported that teacher educators in higher education often resort to self-initiated and peer-supported development due to institutional gaps. The emphasis on collaborative and context-specific learning in the international literature (Smith & Wyness, 2024) contrasts with the solitary and disconnected nature of PD in Bangladesh, suggesting a divergence between global

best practices and local implementation. While IQAC-led reforms show potential, their execution is hindered by insufficient facilitator expertise and lack of follow-through, a concern also noted in Chowdhury et al. (2023), who reported on the limited impact of IQAC despite curriculum reforms. Thus, my study contributes new empirical insight into how this structural void directly influences ESL instruction in higher education, especially in under-resourced contexts.

Furthermore, it illuminates how Bangladeshi university ESL teachers perceive and navigate this gap not merely as a logistical challenge but as a structural deficiency in policy and institutional vision.

Across participant responses, data reveals three interconnected PD needs: (1) development of structured, culturally responsive local approaches; (2) improved institutional support and capacity; and (3) training that aligns with practical teaching contexts. These unmet needs reflect broader institutional and instructional challenges in Bangladesh's ESL higher-education landscape. My study demonstrates that the current reliance on imported approaches and teacher self-initiative is unsustainable and highlights an urgent need for systemic reform grounded in local realities.

Both PR and PB university ESL teachers in Bangladesh expressed strong support for a range of PD strategies, particularly mentoring, workshops, self-monitoring, and team teaching, viewing them as essential to their professional growth. For instance, Mahmud (PB) and Rezaul (PB) emphasized mentoring and reflective practices as beneficial, though they noted cultural resistance and inconsistent institutional application. Similarly, PR participants such as Mousumi and Jesmin highlighted the relevance of collaborative approaches—including action research and team teaching—with Jesmin specifically underscoring the value of intercultural co-teaching. A point of convergence emerged around institutional inertia; both PR and PB participants remarked

on the fragmented, irregular, or absent implementation of PD structures. As Rezaul (PB) noted, “consistent implementation remains rare and irregular,” a concern echoed by Meherun (PR), who found value in peer-based PD but acknowledged institutional barriers. However, a notable divergence lies in the extent of PD exposure: PR participants such as Mousumi reported more diverse engagement in PD activities, including teacher support groups and peer observation, whereas PB participants like Selim described minimal access despite their motivation, stating, “I have rarely found many types of professional development approaches.” Muntasir (PR) also introduced the theme of individual variability, highlighting the need for differentiated PD approaches based on learning preferences—a dimension less evident in PB accounts. No significant differences were observed between PR and PB participants in their recognition of the value of PD approaches, but differences were evident in institutional provision, support structures, and depth and breadth of experience. These findings suggest that while both groups share conceptual alignment on the importance of PD, private universities may offer slightly broader exposure, whereas public institutions reflect more pronounced structural and cultural barriers to implementation.

Theme 5: Professional Development and Commodification of English

This theme examines how neoliberal policy frameworks—marked by privatization and marketization—shape ELT and PD practices in Bangladeshi higher education. Drawing on rich empirical accounts, the findings expose a pronounced tension between commercially driven institutional imperatives and the need for equitable, pedagogically grounded PD systems. Teachers’ narratives reveal how commodification, managerialism, and systemic neglect have eroded instructional quality and professional morale while marginalizing efforts to build

sustainable teacher expertise. The two sub-themes and associated codes identified while analyzing the data for Theme 5 are presented in Table 11 below.

Table 9

Summary Table of Subthemes and Codes for Theme 5: Professional Development and Commodification of English

Subtheme 5.1 Market-Driven ELT Undermines Pedagogical Integrity in Bangladesh	Frequency
5.1.1 Commodification of ELT	High
5.1.2 Hiring of non-specialists	High
5.1.3 Grade inflation	High
5.1.4 Commercialized test preparation	High
5.1.5 Short-term profit motives	Medium
5.1.6 Ethical disillusionment	Medium
5.1.7 Institutional complicity	Medium
5.1.8 Loss of communicative/critical value in ELT	Medium
Subtheme 5.2 Systemic Marginalization of ELT Professionals in Market-Driven Academia	
5.2.1 Lack of PD support/funding	High
5.2.2 Unsustainable workload	High
5.2.3 Managerialism	Medium
5.2.4 Role diffusion	Medium
5.2.5 Systemic inequality	Medium
5.2.6 Professional isolation	Medium

5.1 Market-Driven ELT Undermines Pedagogical Integrity in Bangladesh

Teacher participants consistently highlighted how the commodification and commercialization of ELT in Bangladesh compromises instructional quality, prioritizing market logic over pedagogical integrity. Mahmud (PB) articulated concerns about market-driven academic programming, stating, “Market demand largely compels private and public universities to offer evening MA in ELT programs, often taught by non-specialists due to shortages, reflecting ELT’s commodification and commercialization, which prioritizes revenue over quality.” Credentials from commodified ELT programs—such as evening MA (master’s)

degrees—are often viewed by employers and academics in Bangladesh as lacking rigor due to minimal regulation and concerns about instructional quality. While the government has recognized these issues and initiated accreditation reforms, including through the Bangladesh Accreditation Council, stronger enforcement and political commitment are necessary to rebuild trust and validate these credentials (M. Ahmed, 2024; Hossain, 2025; Ray, 2024; Sohag, 2025; “UGC Warns Students”, 2019).

Mahfuzur (PR) critiqued the tension between policy and practice in language education, explaining, “Despite state restrictions on English, like signboard bans, market demand still prioritizes fluency—even over academic strength. This contradiction is troubling, as even the British Council of Bangladesh now commodifies English via simplified tests for low-proficiency migrants, like ‘Life Skills.’” Zabin (PR) highlighted the profit-oriented nature of many private language initiatives, stating, “Many coaching centers and private universities offer short English courses with inadequately trained teachers merely for profit, ultimately generating inefficient manpower despite claiming to prepare students for the job market and opportunities abroad.” Ziaur (PB) underscored the instrumental role of English in economic mobility, explaining, “English is vital not only for immigration or education abroad but also for good jobs within Bangladesh, prompting private academies to offer IELTS and TOEFL, as people see it as a cure-all—reflecting English’s growing commodification and commercialization.” Nila (PR) called attention to institutional practices that obscure linguistic deficiencies, stating, “Even top private universities inflate GPAs despite poor English proficiency, producing graduates with prestigious degrees yet weak communication skills—particularly noticeable overseas—undermining language educators’ morale and efforts to improve instructional quality.” Jesmin (PR) reflected on the ethical implications of treating language as a market commodity, explaining, “If students

treat English as a commodity, it is difficult to convey its communicative value—an outlook that deeply discourages educators who uphold the ethical and educational significance of language learning.”

Despite broad concern about the negative effects of marketization, a few participants acknowledged the complex realities of commercialization in the current educational landscape. As a summary of the general sentiment, participants agreed that the commercialization of ELT undermines teaching quality at the higher-education level by subordinating pedagogical aims to financial gain. However, some nuanced perspectives emerged. Russel (PB) suggested that commercialization may be defensible under specific conditions, stating, “I view commercialization negatively for restricting access to English education in Bangladesh. However, it is justifiable if it promotes professional growth—such as funding further study or publications—while staying reasonable and ensuring equitable access.” In contrast, Muntasir (PR) offered a pragmatic view, arguing that commodification may improve quality through competition and demand: “I do not see commercialization and commodification as problems; rather, English is undeniably a commodity needed for trade, not friendship. Embracing this reality can enhance teaching quality through competition, market demands, and the pursuit of profit-driven excellence.” Rezaul (PB) echoed this tempered stance, asserting that partial commercialization is necessary given institutional limitations, explaining, “I believe English language education must be partially commercialized, despite its drawbacks, since the government alone cannot meet demand. However, strict regulations are essential to prevent exploitation and ensure that private institutions provide ethical and genuinely beneficial services.”

Together, these perspectives reflect a critical yet contextually grounded understanding of how commercial imperatives shape ELT in Bangladesh, often at the expense of instructional quality, though occasionally offering pragmatic opportunities for innovation and access—if carefully managed. When asked about how the commercialization and commodification of English language teaching in Bangladesh affect teaching quality in higher education, the teacher participants acknowledge that this commercialization and commodification may, under certain conditions, support professional growth and institutional sustainability. However, they believe that, overall, this market-driven orientation undermines efforts to enhance educational quality at the higher-education level by prioritizing profit over pedagogical integrity and compromising long-term learning outcomes.

To reiterate, teacher participants highlighted the commodification and commercialization of ELT in Bangladesh as a significant barrier to instructional quality, where market logic often supersedes pedagogical integrity. Mahmud's (PB) statement points to how economic imperatives override academic standards, with the hiring of non-specialists representing a symptom of institutional prioritization of revenue. This concern connects with Nila's (PR) observation of inflated GPAs, reflecting a shared worry about the dilution of instructional rigor across institutions. One possible response to this issue could involve adopting a pass/fail grading system grounded in a mastery-based approach, where a pass denotes a high standard of achievement without relying on percentage scores. Mahfuzur (PR) reveals a paradox in national language policy—restrictive on the surface but permissive in practice when market demands prevail. His insight underscores a profound institutional inconsistency, showing how state-endorsed global actors participate in English's commodification. This contradiction amplifies the disillusionment felt by teachers like Jesmin (PR).

Zabin's (PR) comment illustrates the short-term profit motives behind many ELT offerings, resulting in superficial language competence. It aligns with Mahmud's (PB) concern about compromised faculty quality, indicating a broader trend of pedagogical compromise in both formal and informal sectors. Ziaur (PR) emphasizes English as an economic tool, reinforcing its treatment as human capital. His view corresponds with Mahfuzur's (PR) and Zabin's (PR) in illustrating how test-oriented teaching has become a commercial service rather than an educational endeavor. Nila's (PR) account suggests institutional complicity in masking language deficiencies, demoralizing committed educators. Her critique complements Mahmud's (PB) and Zabin's (PR), reinforcing a shared perception that institutional branding has replaced genuine academic development. Jesmin (PR) critiques the student mindset shaped by commercial imperatives. Her ethical and pedagogical perspective highlights the challenge of sustaining communicative and humanistic values in a commodified ELT context.

Further to these observations, participants presented more balanced perspectives, suggesting that commercialization may not be uniformly detrimental. Rezaul (PB), for instance, argued that partial commercialization is necessary due to institutional limitations, acknowledging the structural constraints on public provision while advocating for regulated market involvement. His stance bridges critical and pragmatic perspectives by affirming the need for market involvement while emphasizing ethical oversight. Building on this line of reasoning, Russel (PB) further emphasized that commercialization is justifiable, particularly when it supports academic advancement and is regulated. His perspective presents a balanced argument: commercialization is not inherently harmful but needs fair implementation to be justifiable. In contrast, Muntasir (PR) adopted a pragmatic stance, framing commodification as a necessary response to market realities. He argued that competition driven by demand could enhance teaching quality. His view

offers a clear counterpoint to others' critiques by presenting commercialization as a potential catalyst for instructional improvement, if aligned with well-defined educational objectives.

In my study, these teacher reflections collectively foreground a perceived erosion of pedagogical quality resulting from the neoliberal commodification of English in Bangladesh's higher education. This outcome resonates with Ali and Hamid's (2022) findings that ELT is increasingly framed as a tool for economic gain, rather than critical or intellectual engagement. Extending this perspective, this study further reveals that commercialization significantly compromises teaching quality by shifting institutional priorities from pedagogical integrity to market imperatives. Participants repeatedly emphasized that financial logics—rather than educational values—drive decisions in both public and private ELT programs, reflecting a broader trend in which English proficiency is reduced to a commodified skill, often measured through standardized metrics such as IELTS and TOEFL.

These institutional shifts are further evidenced in teacher concerns about instructional quality and academic standards. Teachers' concerns about inadequately trained teachers and inflated grades align with Ahmed's (2016) critique of profit-driven private institutions sacrificing academic rigor. Moreover, Mahmud (PB) and Zabin's (PR) observations converge with Kabir and Chowdhury's (2021) analysis of how universities often compromise faculty expertise and program integrity in pursuing revenue. The observed trend of universities prioritizing revenue at the expense of faculty expertise and program integrity supports critiques by Javadi and Asl (2020), who suggest that marketization compromises both curriculum coherence and teacher identity. However, the role of PD in regulating or reforming such practices remains unaddressed in their work.

Unlike many articles reviewed from the perspective of Bangladeshi education, my study offers rare empirical insight into teacher morale and ethical disillusionment—highlighted poignantly by Mahfuzur (PR) and Jesmin (PR)—which is largely absent in policy- and curriculum-oriented studies. While the existing literature outlines the macro-structural pressures of neoliberalism, the present findings contribute micro-level narratives that reveal its everyday implications for teacher agency, motivation, and resistance. In this context, participants such as Mahfuzur (PR) and Jesmin (PR) also voiced concerns about the ethical consequences of treating English as a commodity, echoing broader critiques that commodification fosters passive, consumer-like engagement with learning. This perspective aligns with Ali and Hamid's (2021) argument that communicative competence in English is increasingly framed as human capital—a means to economic mobility rather than a vehicle for intellectual or intercultural development.

Some participants expressed conditional support for commercialization, viewing it as justifiable if properly regulated and used to promote institutional sustainability or professional development. Russel (PB) and Rezaul (PB), for example, saw it boost academic productivity and compensate for public underfunding—a position that aligns with literature acknowledging the complex role of marketization in postcolonial settings, such as Ali and Hamid (2022), who highlight ELT aid's potential to address educational disparities when equitably implemented. In contrast, Muntasir (PR) viewed commodification positively, suggesting that competition and demand could improve teaching quality. His perspective reflects the optimism of human capital theory and resonates with development-oriented ELT initiatives (e.g., EIA), which present English as a tool for poverty reduction and socio-economic mobility (Ali et al., 2023).

Nevertheless, despite these more affirmative perspectives, a critical gap remains in much of the existing research. Notably, while research such as Ali et al. (2023) contextualizes the

acquisition of ELT related skills under human capital theory, this work does not discuss the demotivating impact that the acquisition of such skills has on educators or the contradictions between policy rhetoric and pedagogical realities that participants like Mahfuzur (PR) and Nila (PR) expose. Hence, this study's findings add critical insight by connecting ideological shifts to lived pedagogical challenges and perceived PD needs.

Noteworthy is that participants' views converge on a central theme: ELT in Bangladesh has become deeply commercialized, resulting in compromised instructional quality, insufficient teacher preparation, and erosion of ethical teaching values. Aligned with these observations, teachers further underscore a key PD need: access to robust, pedagogically grounded training to resist market pressures and uphold quality standards. These needs reflect broader institutional challenges where neoliberal forces have redefined English from a communicative tool to a marketable commodity, undermining both teacher morale and educational outcomes.

However, participants also acknowledged that commercialization could be leveraged under certain conditions to enhance professional growth, ensure institutional survival, and meet rising demand—provided it is ethically regulated and equitably implemented. The minority of participants who supported a pragmatic embrace of market forces highlighted the potential benefits of competition and accountability in enhancing service quality.

5.2 Systemic Marginalization of ELT Professionals in Market-Driven Academia

Participants' reflections reveal how private-university ELT professionals in Bangladesh face institutional pressures, limited PD opportunities, commercialized educational priorities, systemic funding inequities, and overwhelming workloads that collectively undermine their motivation and growth. For instance, Samad (PR) highlighted the institutional emphasis on metrics over pedagogy, which compromises assessment integrity and diminishes teacher morale.

As he explained, “I feel administrative pressure to inflate grades, often misrepresenting students’ abilities and creating tension between teaching and assessment, as institutions prioritize rankings and revenue—an experience that demotivates me as a university-level ELT professional.” Shaila (PR) noted the lack of structural support for professional advancement, stating, “Except for a few top-tier private universities, most offer neither time nor financial support for overseas training or study, making it difficult for teachers to attend extended programs abroad.” Nargis (PB) offered a critical view of institutional motives, asserting, “I do not hesitate to say that most private universities in Bangladesh, though claiming high educational standards, are essentially commercial ventures focused on profit, charging high tuition fees, with few exceptions.” Tanjila (PR) drew attention to systemic funding disparities between public and private institutions, noting, “Private universities have been operating for decades; however, the UGC does not provide any funding for private university teachers, which highlights systemic inequality in funding policies between public and private universities.” Russel (PB) described the unsustainable workload that impedes professional growth, remarking, “I teach two two-hour classes Monday to Thursday (16 hours), often evenings on Fridays and Saturdays, while also preparing lectures, advising students, grading, attending meetings and committees, and invigilating—so how can I manage time for professional development?” Kashmira (PR) similarly emphasized the burden of excessive responsibilities, commenting, “I teach four courses in a week, direct the language center unpaid, moderate the English club, and coordinate the department—leaving me no time, not even to sleep.”

Samad’s (PR) reflection highlights how assessment practices in private universities are not only compromised but also demoralizing for teachers. The interview excerpt signals a deeper systemic issue where educational quality is secondary to market-based reputations, echoing a

commodified culture in ELT. This concern aligns with other participants' critiques of institutional priorities, notably Nargis's (PB) claim that private universities are "essentially commercial ventures." Samad's (PR) experience situates the broader theme of instructional disenfranchisement under performance-driven managerialism, pointing to an urgent need for PD that reinforces assessment literacy and ethical teaching practices.

Shaila's (PR) statement—"most offer neither time nor financial support for overseas training"—captures a significant structural void in PD provision. Her experience underscores how opportunities for international exposure, considered essential for academic renewal, are severely restricted by institutional inertia. This directly connects to the professional stagnation reported by others, such as Russel and Kashmira (PR), who struggle to manage workloads. Shaila's (PR) perspective confirms the systemic failure to institutionalize structured PD approaches, reinforcing how the lack of institutional support perpetuates professional isolation.

Russel's (PB) assertion reveals the unsustainable demands placed on faculty. The absence of work-life balance not only diminishes the quality of life but also directly impedes meaningful professional engagement. His experience echoes findings from the literature on the negative correlation between workload and performance, where excessive responsibilities restrict engagement with PD, research, and reflective practices.

Similarly, Kashmira's (PR) overwhelming duties highlight role diffusion without support or compensation. These burdens marginalize PD, leaving teachers ill-equipped to meet evolving pedagogical expectations. Together, these narratives underscore a systemic undervaluing of academic labor and the urgent necessity of a contextualized, institutionalized PD infrastructure in private universities in Bangladesh.

Findings generated by this study contribute critical insights into the interplay between institutional constraints and the PD needs of university-level ESL teachers in universities in Bangladesh. The participants' accounts reflect how institutional priorities—anchored in neoliberal logics of commodification, cost-efficiency, and performativity—fundamentally obstruct opportunities for sustainable PD.

These findings closely align with the literature reviewed in several respects. For example, the literature review evidences how neoliberal transformations have repositioned higher education as a commercial enterprise, especially within private universities that often prioritize market imperatives over pedagogical quality. Similarly, the pervasive managerialism identified by Kabir and Chowdhury (2021) confirms participants' frustrations about administrative burdens and profit-driven institutional cultures that demotivate teachers and erode morale.

Further, these findings are substantiated by Rahman and Avan (2016), whose empirical work reports that excessive teaching and non-teaching workloads compromise research engagement and PD involvement, often leading to burnout and disengagement. The literature reviewed also indicates that private universities in Bangladesh seldom invest in robust PD frameworks, with training initiatives often limited, misaligned, or entirely absent. This supports Shaila's (PR) and Kashmira's (PR) accounts of negligible institutional support and the absence of formal PD pathways.

However, while prior studies focus predominantly on policy misalignments and test-centric pedagogies in ELT (Ali & Hamid, 2022), the present data reveal how macro-level pressures translate into micro-level challenges such as grade inflation, moral distress, and logistical barriers to professional growth. This micro-macro intersection remains under-explored in existing literature and represents a novel contribution of my study.

To conceptually ground this intersection, Anthony Giddens' structuration theory (1979, 1984) offers a critical lens through which the relationship between macro-level educational structures and micro-level teacher practices can be analyzed. Giddens conceptualizes social structure not merely as an external constraint but as both the medium and outcome of social practices. Applying this framework, the institutional and policy-level forces identified by Ali and Hamid (2022)—such as test-centric pedagogies and policy misalignments—can be understood as structures that shape, yet are simultaneously shaped by, the everyday actions of ESL teachers in Bangladesh. The current study contributes to this theoretical landscape by showing how such macro-level pressures manifest as micro-level challenges, including grade inflation, moral distress, and professional stagnation. These are not isolated outcomes, but rather the recursive effects of structural forces internalized and enacted by teachers in their daily practices—reflecting Giddens' notion of the duality of structure. In doing so, the study highlights how teachers are not passive recipients of policy but knowledgeable agents whose actions both reproduce and potentially transform the institutional contexts in which they work.

Building upon this theoretical framing, it is important to note that existing research from the Bangladeshi context does not adequately address PD within higher education, particularly concerning ESL teachers in public and private universities. Most studies either foreground secondary education contexts (Hamid & Baldauf, 2014; Rahman, 2021b; Sarkar & Hossain, 2020) or remain general in their critique of ELT policy. My research, therefore, provides a unique empirical window into the everyday realities of public and private university ELT faculty and their unmet PD needs, extending the literature on PD from an institutionally embedded, higher-education teacher-informed perspective.

The findings suggest that university ESL teachers in Bangladesh identify several critical PD needs: access to structured, context-sensitive training; time and financial support for academic advancement; and relief from excessive workloads. These needs are embedded within broader institutional and instructional challenges, including commercialized educational priorities, insufficient funding, administrative overreach, and moral tensions arising from compromised assessment practices. Collectively, these issues point to a systemic failure to integrate PD as an institutional priority. Addressing this failure requires not only policy-level reforms but also cultural shifts within private universities—where teacher development must be seen not as a cost but as an investment in educational integrity and pedagogical excellence.

Both PR and PB participants identified the commercialization of ELT as a critical factor undermining pedagogical integrity, citing the hiring of non-specialists, grade inflation, and market-driven curricula as shared concerns. Mahmud (PB) noted that “market demand largely compels ... universities to offer evening MA in ELT programs, often taught by non-specialists,” a critique echoed by Zabin (PR), who described short-term, profit-oriented ELT courses as “generating inefficient manpower.” Similarly, despite low proficiency levels, Nila (PR) and Mahmud (PB) raised parallel concerns regarding institutional complicity in inflating student outcomes. In contrast, divergence emerged in attitudes toward commodification’s potential benefits. While Muntasir (PR) endorsed commercialization to enhance quality through competition, asserting that “English is undeniably a commodity ... needed for trade,” Russel (PB) and Rezaul (PB) viewed it as a necessary but tightly regulable mechanism to supplement public limitations, conditional on equitable access and ethical oversight. Moreover, PB participants, such as Russel, highlighted overwhelming workloads as a major impediment to professional development, whereas PR participants like Kashmira emphasized role diffusion and

unpaid administrative duties. Both groups, however, reported systemic neglect of structured PD support. No significant differences were observed between PR and PB participants in relation to their ethical disillusionment and the perceived erosion of communicative values in ELT. These insights reflect context-bound tensions shaped by distinct institutional economies yet united by shared professional challenges under neoliberal academic governance.

Conclusion

This chapter presented the views of 19 English language teachers from five Bangladeshi universities. While participants expressed a general commitment to their instructional responsibilities, they also articulated a range of constraints that shape their pedagogical practices. These include limited PD, administrative pressure, inadequate institutional support, and a lack of autonomy in curriculum design. Teachers described their efforts to balance formal curricular requirements with students' practical needs, often within rigid and resource-constrained environments. Many acknowledged the growing importance of communicative competence but cited structural barriers to implementing interactive or student-centered approaches. The accounts reflect a complex negotiation between policy, pedagogy, and institutional realities, with varied degrees of alignment between intended instructional goals and actual classroom practices. Although the findings stem from a small group, the group is diverse and provides rich situated insights into how ESL teachers experience, adapt to, and reflect on their instructional roles. The following chapter examines students' perspectives on English language learning and instruction, offering a parallel but distinct view of the same educational landscape.

Chapter 6: Findings and Discussion: Students' Interviews

Introduction

This chapter presents findings from focus-group interviews conducted with university student participants in Bangladesh. The findings are organized by key themes that were identified during data analysis. Each theme is introduced with a concise explanatory paragraph providing context and emphasizing significance, followed by a summary table. The summary tables display the corresponding thematic categories, codes, and frequencies resulting from the analysis process. These tables help to make clear the big ideas and their interconnectedness, as discussed and interpreted in this chapter.

Research Participants

This section presents information about the students who took part in this study. As displayed in Table 12 below, 15 students representing five different universities in Bangladesh agreed to participate. Nine were pursuing studies at three different private universities, and the remaining six studied at two different public universities. The focus-group interviews that I conducted with them ranged from one hour and 10 minutes to one hour and 48 minutes, with the average interview lasting one hour and 34 minutes.

Table 10

Student Participants, Institutions, and Interview Durations

Type of University	Student Participants (Pseudonym)	Interview Duration
Private (North-South University-NSU)	Khaled Saima Sunjida	1 hour and 44 minutes
Public (Jahangirnagar University-JU)	Rafi Faisal Zarif	1 hour and 48 minutes
Private (East West University-EWU)	Nova Wasna Peuli	1 hour and 48 minutes

Public (University of Dhaka-Institute of Modern Languages)	Shuvo Nujhat Farhana	1 hour and 20 minutes
Private (Notre Dame University Bangladesh - NDUB)	Nakib Tamanna Iffat	1 hour and 10 minutes
Average Interview Duration		1 hour and 34 minutes

Theme 1: Importance of English Language Teaching and Learning for Socio-Academic Mobility

This section explores how student participants conceptualize English as a critical enabler of socio-academic mobility, framing the language as both a pragmatic tool and a symbolic asset. Drawing on students' interview data, the findings illuminate participants' perceptions of English as integral to academic success, employability, and global engagement. The findings reveal how English is positioned as a gateway to opportunity and legitimacy, offering insight into the broader socio-political dynamics of Bangladeshi higher education and informing the discussion of PD needs among university ESL teachers. The subtheme and the corresponding codes identified while analyzing the data for Theme 1 are presented in Table 13 below.

Table 13

Summary Table of Codes for Theme 1: Importance of English Language Teaching and Learning for Socio-Academic Mobility

Theme 1: Importance of English Language Teaching and Learning for Socio-Academic Mobility	Frequency
1.1 English for education and workplace	High
1.2 Empowerment through English (access to global opportunities, IELTS, travel)	High
1.3 English as a global lingua franca	High
1.4 Professional advancement via English	High
1.5 English-medium instruction (need for pedagogical training in EMI)	Medium

The significance of English as a tool for upward mobility, academic advancement, and global engagement is a recurring theme in student participants' reflections. Saima (PR) asserted that English is vital not only for education but also for professional and workplace contexts, stating, "We need English not only for education but also for business, university, or any workplace—it is the most commonly used language." Tamanna (PR) remarked on the empowering role of English in accessing broader opportunities, explaining, "I felt it important because English is essential for higher education, employment, and international travel, including taking the IELTS exam."

Wasna (PR) highlighted the pedagogical implications of English-medium instruction and the need for competent language use by both learners and educators, noting, "In my MA in ELT, a professor's use of Bangla challenged me, as I was used to English instruction; I believe effective language learning demands that both students and teachers be properly trained to use English." Shuvo (PB) emphasized the function of English as a global medium of communication, commenting, "English is the lingua franca ... not limited to native speakers ... I need to learn English to communicate with both native and non-native speakers." Farhana (PB) articulated the professional advantages linked to English, asserting, "The job field of English language is much greater ... and the opportunity for higher study ... motivates me to join this department."

Saima's (PR) statement underscores the practical and instrumental value of English across multiple domains—education, business, and the workplace—framing it as a ubiquitous communicative tool that facilitates access to formal and professional spaces. This perception positions English as a prerequisite for upward mobility and aligns with broader neoliberal narratives surrounding employability. Echoing Saima's (PR) view, Nujhat (PB) also emphasized the instrumental role of English in securing opportunities in higher education and employment.

She noted the significance of English for international mobility and academic pursuits, stating, “Higher studies, jobs, even travel abroad all require English ... that is why I preferred to study the subject.” Similarly, Khaled (PR) highlighted the necessity of English not only in educational contexts but also in professional and workplace environments, asserting, “We need English ... not only for education, but you go for business, you go for any university, or any workplace, we need English.” Nakib (PR) further reinforced this perspective by pointing out the English proficiency requirement for international travel and study, explaining, “If you want to travel and study in another country, you need to sit for the IELTS exam.” The instrumental framing of English articulated by these participants is shared by Farhana (PB), who also explicitly cited the broader job market and academic motivation as key factors for choosing to study English. Collectively, these perspectives construct English not merely as an academic subject but as a strategic asset for socio-economic advancement.

Tamanna’s (PR) reflection adds an affective dimension to the discourse, illustrating how English language learning contributes not only to practical outcomes but also to a sense of empowerment and personal significance. Her emphasis on higher education, international travel, and preparation for the IELTS examination underscores the globalized functions of English. In this context, her narrative parallels Shuvo’s (PB) emphasis on English as a lingua franca, reinforcing the idea that English language competence is vital for effective communication among native and non-native speakers. Tamanna’s (PR) experience further affirms the status of English as a gateway to international recognition and social mobility. This broader instrumental value of English is echoed in several participants’ perspectives. Faisal (PB) highlights the economic imperative of English proficiency, asserting, “Even for getting a good job, English is compulsory, that is why we learn English.” Zarif (PB) similarly emphasizes the professional

utility of English, noting, “If you want to get a good job, you need to know English.” Sunjida (PR) adds an educational dimension to this narrative: “I want to go abroad in the future to have higher studies ... so I need to have a good command of English.” These testimonies collectively underscore the strategic role of English in facilitating access to global educational and employment opportunities.

Shuvo (PB) presents a more global view of English, emphasizing its function beyond native-speaker norms. His recognition of English as a tool for transnational communication aligns with global lingua franca theories. This perspective contributes a critical angle to the discussion, highlighting the shift from native-centric to global-centric orientations in English language learning. Farhana’s (PB) assertion reiterates the structural advantages associated with English proficiency, particularly in employment and higher education. Her motivation to study English for career advancement complements earlier views by Saima (PR) and Nujhat (PB) and reinforces the idea that English is not only a means of communication but also a mechanism for professional validation. Other participants similarly reflect on the instrumental and symbolic value of English. Peuli (PR) asserts that “English is a global language,” while Faisal (PB) remarks, “If I graduate from English ... I can communicate with more people around the world.” Likewise, Zarif (PB) explains, “I want to become competent in English ... because it is a global language.” Collectively, these perspectives reinforce the perceived instrumental and symbolic value of English in enabling global engagement and upward social mobility.

Wasna’s (PR) experience offers a pedagogical insight, highlighting the impact of instructional medium on learning efficacy. Her discomfort with Bangla used in a postgraduate ELT course suggests a perceived misalignment between medium and content. Her call for teacher and student training aligns with her belief that English instruction necessitates fluency

and pedagogical competence. This is consistent with findings that link EMI to academic adjustment challenges, especially when instructional practices do not align with student expectations or institutional language policies. Teacher accounts further illustrate the complexities of language use in EMI classrooms. As Iffat (PR) explains, “There will be students from Bangla medium and there will be English medium ... teachers should consider students based on their qualifications,” suggesting that teachers must account for students’ diverse linguistic backgrounds when choosing their instructional language. Similarly, Nova (PR) notes, “Even though he is an ELT teacher ... his medium of instruction is 80 percent Bangla,” demonstrating that even trained English language teachers may predominantly use Bangla in EMI contexts. These perspectives collectively illustrate the challenges of implementing EMI policies uniformly, reinforcing the importance of aligning institutional mandates with classroom realities.

The participants’ responses to the interview question “Why do you learn English?” illustrate a consistent and pragmatic orientation: English is perceived as essential for academic achievement, career prospects, international mobility, and global engagement. These findings reflect a form of linguistic instrumentalism rooted in broader neoliberal ideologies that position English as human capital. This aligns with Ali and Hamid’s (2022) analysis of the neoliberal shaping of English language policy in Bangladesh, where English proficiency is commodified as a resource to enhance individual employability and national competitiveness.

Participants such as Saima (PR) and Khaled (PR) highlighted the ubiquitous role of English across professional, educational, and commercial domains, viewing it as indispensable in securing socio-economic progress. Their sentiments align closely with the neoliberal

conceptualization of English as a “language of profit” and “human capital,” as documented in recent scholarship (Ali & Hamid, 2022; Heller & Duchêne, 2016).

Moreover, the participants’ narratives align with the literature on English as a global language (Hamid & Sultana, 2024), where English is regarded not only as a medium of instruction but as a symbol of socio-academic capital. Tamanna’s (PR) and Shuvo’s (PB) emphasis on international travel and communication with diverse speakers reflects a global lingua franca orientation that parallels findings in Sikder (2024), highlighting English’s aspirational value among Bangladeshi students.

Iffat’s (PR) and Wasna’s (PR) concern about instructional language suggests a gap between institutional EMI policies and pedagogical practice. Hamid and Sultana (2024) support this, noting that while EMI is often institutionalized in private universities, the actual classroom practices vary widely, leading to inconsistencies in student experience. Their view also indirectly supports the need for PD in both linguistic and pedagogical competencies, a theme which is largely absent in earlier EMI-focused policy discourse.

Compared to the literature reviewed, these findings are partially aligned with Hamid and Sultana (2024), who found that students at EMI institutions often face challenges when teachers lack sufficient proficiency or when instruction is inconsistently delivered in English. Nova (PR), Iffat (PR), and Wasna’s (PR) experience exemplifies this dissonance, reinforcing the need for better EMI preparedness in higher education, particularly for educators.

Although the literature reviewed broadly emphasizes English for development (Ara, 2020), the current findings uniquely foreground teachers’ personal and professional motivations, offering insights into how institutional pressures, global expectations, and self-directed aspirations converge in shaping English language learning. Notably, this study provides new

empirical evidence about teacher perceptions of EMI, which is underexplored in current Bangladeshi scholarship, including in Ali and Hamid (2022), who focus more on policy than on educators' lived experiences.

A recurring theme across participants' responses is that English is pursued for its instrumental and symbolic capital (Kramsch, 2021), serving as a vehicle for academic success, professional advancement, and global connectivity. In my study, participants' perceptions reflect a deep internalization of English as a marker of social legitimacy, academic preparedness, and employability. This internalization is evident in the accounts of Farhana (PB) and Faisal (PB), who explicitly link their academic and career trajectories to mastery of the English language. Their narratives illustrate an implicit acceptance of English as both a prerequisite and a gateway to upward social mobility. More broadly, participants' reflections frame English as a language of aspiration and transformation, underscoring its perceived indispensability in an increasingly globalized world. These student perspectives align with prevailing discourses in Bangladeshi higher education, wherein English operates as a linguistic gatekeeper to opportunity, as articulated by both Hamid and Sultana (2024) and Ali and Hamid (2022).

These insights address the interview question "Why do you learn English?" by revealing that students perceive English not simply as a curricular requirement but as a strategic resource essential for career advancement, academic participation, and personal development. The language is perceived as an essential competence for navigating local and international landscapes, validating its status as both a practical skill and a symbolic resource.

Echoing these student perspectives, Wasna's (PR) critique highlights complementary concerns regarding teacher preparedness, indicating that university faculty require structured training in effective EMI delivery—an area largely overlooked in most Bangladeshi universities,

as also noted by Das (2021) and Nur and Short (2019). Notably, these findings resonate with those drawn from student perspectives, which similarly underscore inconsistencies in EMI implementation and a lack of pedagogical support. Students have expressed concerns about inadequate language proficiency among some instructors and the resulting challenges in classroom comprehension and interaction. Thus, the analysis of student data reinforces the teacher participants' calls for pedagogical training and institutional support, suggesting a shared recognition of the need for systematic and context-sensitive professional development to ensure effective EMI practices.

Moreover, the findings suggest that PD should address institutional inconsistencies in EMI implementation, particularly in public universities where memorandum of understanding practices remain ambiguous (Hamid & Sultana, 2024). The preference for English instruction voiced by participants such as Wasna (PR) and Saima (PR) signals a mismatch between teacher expectations and institutional support, reinforcing the call for comprehensive and context-sensitive PD initiatives.

This study contributes an original perspective by revealing that PD needs are not just technical (e.g., language proficiency), but also structural, involving policy clarity, pedagogical alignment, and equitable access to training resources—particularly for teachers from rural or underfunded institutions. While discussed in the literature reviewed in abstract terms, these dimensions are concretely evidenced through the participants' lived experiences in this study. The comparative analysis of student perspectives from private and public universities reveals both convergence and divergence in how participants conceptualize the role of English in higher education. Students across both institutional types consistently framed English as essential for academic achievement, professional advancement, and international mobility, demonstrating a

shared belief in its instrumental and symbolic value. For instance, Khaled (PR) and Zarif (PB) both emphasized the necessity of English across academic and occupational domains, with Khaled noting, “We need English ... for business, university, or any workplace,” and Zarif affirming, “If you want to get a good job, you need to know English.” Similarly, both PR and PB students highlighted English as a global lingua franca, with Shuvo (PB) remarking on its transnational communicative utility. No significant differences were observed between PR and PB participants in relation to these overarching perceptions of English as a tool for socio-academic mobility. However, a notable divergence emerged regarding pedagogical expectations. PR students, such as Wasna, expressed concern over inconsistent EMI practices, emphasizing a need for teacher training aligned with EMI policies: “A professor’s use of Bangla challenged me ... effective language learning demands that both students and teachers be properly trained.” Such critiques were less explicit among PB participants, suggesting a greater sensitivity within private institutions to pedagogical alignment and EMI delivery. These findings, while context-specific, underscore institutional disparities in EMI implementation and reflect a shared yet differentially articulated demand for pedagogical competence and structural support across Bangladesh’s higher education.

Theme 2: Systemic and Pedagogical Failures in English Language Teacher Preparation

The effectiveness of English language instruction in Bangladeshi universities is closely tied to the preparedness and proficiency of instructors. Drawing on student narratives, this section explores how perceived deficiencies in teacher training, language competence, and pedagogical adaptability affect learning outcomes. These students’ perspectives provide critical insight into systemic challenges across educational stages and underscore the broader institutional shortcomings that undermine the quality of ELT in higher education in Bangladesh.

This second theme and the corresponding codes identified while analyzing the data are presented in Table 14 below.

Table 14

Summary Table of Codes for Theme 2: Systemic and Pedagogical Failures in English Language Teacher Preparation

Theme 2: Systemic and Pedagogical Failures in English Language Teacher Preparation	Frequency
2.1 Lack of teacher preparation	High
2.2 Inadequate English proficiency of teachers	High
2.3 Foundational gaps from early education	High
2.4 Limited digital pedagogical skills	Medium
2.5 Overreliance on outdated methods (e.g., GTM)	Medium
2.6 Disconnect between curriculum and implementation	Medium
2.7 Instructional clarity despite limited fluency	Low

In response to the interview question, “To what extent are the teachers good at English,” the students described a range of experiences reflecting concerns about teacher preparedness, language proficiency, instructional methods, and systemic shortcomings across different stages of education. Iffat (PR) commented on the disparity between curriculum quality and teaching effectiveness, asserting, “I find our syllabuses exciting and informative, but unfortunately, some instructors fail to realize their full potential—so I attribute shortcomings not to the English lessons, but rather to the teacher’s lack of preparation.” Peuli (PR) highlighted how early educational experiences shaped attitudes toward English proficiency, stating, “I strove to improve from primary school to university, but many teachers—particularly in early education—lacked English proficiency, reinforcing the belief that mastery was unnecessary; only those with overseas experience or practice demonstrated strong command.” Rafi (PB) emphasized the long-term impact of early instructional gaps, arguing, “I believe the issue begins in primary school, where inadequate attention from teachers leads to foundational gaps that persist through higher

education, prompting my proposal to revise university syllabi with bridging courses to address these deficiencies.”

Other students offered informative comments on their experiences with English language education. Zarif (PB) pointed out the cumulative effects of systemic weaknesses in English education, noting, “In Bangladesh, despite 14 years of studying English, many still struggle to express themselves; while I do not expect university teachers to teach everything, they must address earlier gaps due to the system’s interconnection.” In contrast to Zarif’s critique of systemic deficiencies, Tamanna (PR) presented a comparatively optimistic view of her classroom experiences, particularly regarding instructional clarity despite linguistic limitations. Tamanna (PR) offered a similarly positive view of instructional clarity despite linguistic limitations, observing, “I found most teachers effective in teaching English, though many lacked fluency and often lectured in Bengali; nonetheless, their instruction was clear, and I faced no difficulties in understanding.” These reflections collectively underscore students’ perceptions that teacher proficiency, pedagogical competency, and systemic support are critical determinants of effective English language education.

Iffat’s (PR) statement critiques not the syllabus itself, which she finds “exciting and informative,” but rather the instructional gap, placing the blame on “the teacher’s lack of preparation.” This highlights a perceived disconnect between curriculum design and curriculum implementation in classroom settings. It also signals students’ capacities to differentiate between curriculum resources (e.g., course syllabus content) and human resources (e.g., English language teachers who can implement the curriculum), foregrounding the critical role of teacher preparedness. Faisal (PB) elaborates on this issue by pointing to pedagogical rigidity and insufficient innovation, observing that, “They follow the same structure, they do not prepare

themselves to teach new ideas.” Similarly, Nova (PR) reflects on the lack of instructional organization and material support, noting, “There were no specific materials, no book, or no handouts. ... It was a little bit less organized.” Nakib (PR) adds to this critique by identifying redundancies within the curriculum, stating that “Some of the courses are overlapping with the content.” Collectively, these observations underscore how deficiencies in instructional delivery—rather than curriculum design itself—can undermine the intended learning experience.

Peuli (PR) draws attention to long-term systemic issues, tracing English proficiency challenges back to early education. She notes that teachers “lacked English proficiency,” leading to a normalization of mediocrity in language competence unless augmented by “overseas experience or practice.” This introduces the idea that proficiency is not institutionally cultivated but individually acquired—a sentiment echoed by others. Wasna (PR) comments on the negative impact of language switching in the classroom, stating, “Using Bangla in English class ... does not put a good impression on students.” Khaled (PR) further elaborates on this concern, noting that “Teachers deliver the lecture in Bengali ... not all of them are fluent,” thereby underscoring the disconnect between instructional language and professional fluency. Saima (PR) adds that “a significant number of instructors lack fluency in spoken English,” reinforcing concerns over teacher preparedness in communicative competence. Echoing the theme of stagnation in PD, Zarif (PB) remarks, “Some of our teachers have stopped learning after getting this job,” pointing to a lack of ongoing pedagogical or linguistic advancement among some faculty members. Collectively, these perspectives illustrate a consistent pattern: institutional shortcomings in cultivating and maintaining English language proficiency among educators, which in turn affects the overall quality of language instruction.

Rafi (PB) continues this critique with a developmental focus, stating that “foundational gaps” from primary school persist into university. His advocacy for “bridging courses” implies an acknowledgement that HEIs must take remedial action to mitigate these deficits, even if the failures originated in earlier schooling phases. This cumulative failure of the education system is further reinforced by students’ reflections on their own experiences. Nova (PR) remarks, “Although we have learned English for 12 years ... our English skills have improved [only] after getting into university,” suggesting that the length of instruction does not necessarily correlate with proficiency. Nujhat (PB) similarly asserts, “Actually, we did not have this knowledge in our 12 years of educational life, before attending university,” highlighting a critical gap in content delivery throughout school. Likewise, Sunjida (PR) reflects on the limitations of her background in Bangla-medium education, stating, “I come from Bangla medium ... and at the university, I do not have enough knowledge about English.” Extending this critique, Zarif (PB) underscores the interconnectivity of educational stages, stating that university teachers “must address earlier gaps due to the system’s interconnection.” His comment that “many still struggle to express ourselves” after 14 years of English education points to a systemic failure, reinforcing Rafi’s (PB) and Peuli’s (PR) concern about the inadequacy of early English education.

Wasna (PR) introduces a pedagogical-technical angle, lamenting teachers’ limited ability to integrate “digital tools like plagiarism checkers” and their preference for traditional methods like GTM. Her comment reflects a view of ELT as outdated and the observation that there are few digital pedagogical tools or teaching strategies employed by English language teachers. Shuvo (PB) reinforces this critique by pointing to teachers’ technological disengagement, stating, “Some of the teachers do not learn technologies ... which is a significant limitation in their teaching practice.” Farhana (PB) further emphasizes the pedagogical limitations of such

practices, arguing that “It should not always be so boring that the teacher will talk, and the students will listen. Digital tools might create fun in the class.” Similarly, Tamanna (PR) laments the outdated nature of teaching materials, observing that “They are using those same contents ... which can be found in SlideShare from maybe 12 years ago.” Together, these student perspectives underscore a shared perception that English language instruction suffers from a lack of technological integration and pedagogical innovation, ultimately limiting its relevance and effectiveness.

In contrast, Tamanna (PR) offers a more forgiving perspective. While acknowledging that teachers “lacked fluencies and often lectured in Bengali,” she found their instruction “clear,” and she faced “no difficulties in understanding.” This suggests that, for some students, linguistic accuracy in English is less important than instructional clarity. Taken together, the quotations foreground student dissatisfaction with teachers’ English proficiency, a lack of instructional innovation, early foundational deficiencies, and the limited digital and methodological training of educators. At the same time, there are isolated instances where instructional clarity mitigates linguistic shortcomings, showing that students’ expectations vary based on their uniqueness as learners, their needs, and their experiences.

In the current study, these student reflections offer strong insight into how learners perceive the quality of English teaching in Bangladeshi universities and how these perceptions relate to challenges across the kindergarten-to-postsecondary educational system. The critique of teacher preparedness aligns closely with what the literature reviewed identifies as a structural weakness in the Bangladeshi ELT ecosystem. According to Das (2021), pre-service teacher training in Bangladesh is neither mandatory nor systematic at the higher-education level. Most

college-level instructors enter classrooms with little or no pedagogical preparation, echoing Nova (PR), Faisal (PB), and Iffat's (PR) concern regarding inadequate teacher preparation.

Further, Nur and Short (2019) argue that ESL teachers are often ill-prepared to adopt communicative methodologies, which corroborates Wasna's (PR) critique of reliance on GTM and resistance to integrating technology. She expressed concern over teachers' limited ability to integrate digital tools into pedagogy. Her account introduces a critical dimension not consistently addressed in prior studies: technological training and adaptability. While literature notes the resistance to CLT due to institutional barriers (Islam, 2021), Wasna (PR) adds specificity by citing digital tool deficiencies. This illustrates that the gap is not only methodological but also technological. Her observation aligns with Younus (2023), who stresses the need for structured digital-literacy programs for teachers, and it reinforces the earlier-identified pattern of low engagement and technological stagnation.

The study findings also resonate with the observations by Ali and Hamid (2022), who stress that neoliberal reforms, privileging employability and global competitiveness over robust pedagogical development, heavily influence higher education in Bangladesh. While CLT has been promoted in policy rhetoric, its classroom implementation remains superficial and weak due to insufficient teacher training and infrastructural deficits.

Tamanna (PR) offered a comparatively positive view of instructional clarity despite linguistic limitations, introducing an alternative perspective that contrasts with the broader dissatisfaction expressed by other participants. Her experience illustrates the complex trade-off between linguistic proficiency and pedagogical clarity, highlighting teaching effectiveness even in the absence of strong English fluency. This idea aligns with statements in the literature reviewed that instruction in many Bangladeshi institutions often prioritizes clarity and content

delivery over fluency and interactive engagement, a tendency consistent with the rote-oriented, teacher-centered approach still prevalent in the system (Rahman et al., 2018a). Tamanna's (PR) account also echoes the findings of Wilson (2021), who distinguishes between language competency and instructional capability, suggesting that effective teaching can still occur through context-sensitive bilingual instruction when fluency is limited. While her perspective partially diverges from the dominant critical tone among participants, it underscores the importance of recognizing instructional variation within a linguistically constrained environment.

Moreover, students' data consistently highlighted teachers' inadequate English proficiency as a critical barrier to effective learning. Statements by Peuli (PR) and Saima (PR) pointing to a lack of fluency among many instructors underscore concerns raised in the literature regarding teachers' communicative competence. Hamid and Sultana (2024) also stress that limited English proficiency among lecturers—especially in public universities—impairs content delivery in EMI contexts. This concern is emulated in the current data through Khaled's (PR) and Wasna's (PR) reflections on code-switching and reduced student motivation when Bangla dominates classroom discourse. Roshid and Sultana (2023) further articulate similar concerns, indicating that parental aspirations for English proficiency via English Version Education (EVE) in Bangladesh are frequently compromised by the insufficient competence of teachers, consequently undermining the pedagogical potential of EMI. EVE is a parallel stream at the primary and secondary levels in Bangladesh, where the national curriculum is delivered in English through translated NCTB textbooks. Unlike English-medium schools that follow foreign curricula, EVE combines the pursuit of English proficiency with adherence to national educational content, making it a distinct and increasingly commodified option (Roshid & Sultana, 2023).

Crucially, the literature reviewed confirms that early education is a weak link in Bangladesh's English language learning pipeline. Hamid and Al Amin (2022) underscore how foundational gaps in primary education led to cumulative deficits by the time students reach university. Rafi (PB) and Peuli's (PR) testimonies support this, reinforcing the call for bridging courses and systemic alignment across educational levels. These systemic gaps in early education are compounded by deficiencies in teacher preparation, as reflected in students' critiques of TD. Their concerns mirror well-documented shortcomings in TPD provision. Although large-scale programs like TELSHEB and EIA have aimed to professionalize ELT, these initiatives have primarily targeted secondary-level teachers and have had limited reach in higher education, particularly beyond urban centers.

Finally, the study results reinforce critiques in the literature regarding institutional neglect of teacher training. As previously emphasized, many universities prioritize enrollment and profit over educational quality, resulting in an underqualified faculty and insufficient infrastructure for teacher support. This institutional short-sightedness undermines the credibility of any national push for EMI, as pointed out in both policy critiques (Ali & Hamid, 2022; Chowdhury & Kabir, 2014; Khan & Sultana, 2021) and student narratives.

When bringing together the findings across the 15 student participants, it becomes evident that students perceive significant deficiencies in both teacher language proficiency and pedagogical capacity. These concerns span early education through to higher education, indicating a systemic failure to provide consistent, high-quality English instruction. Key challenges include inadequate teacher preparedness and training, foundational gaps carried over from primary education, limited use of digital and interactive pedagogies, and a perceived disconnect between linguistic fluency and effective instruction. These student perspectives align

with the literature documenting the structural inadequacies in English language instruction, particularly in higher education. This study's data also suggests that while policy frameworks may endorse communicative competence and digital integration, actual classroom practices are shaped by entrenched lecture-based approaches, low teacher proficiency, and fragmented PD efforts.

Considering these patterns, it is noteworthy that although students did not articulate prescriptive solutions, it can be assumed from the data they produced regarding systemic and pedagogical failures in English language teacher preparation that the inverse of the problems they identified can reasonably be interpreted as potential remedies. Their accounts suggest a pressing need for comprehensive teacher training, mastery of learner-centred pedagogies, digital literacy and willingness to apply educational technologies, the adoption of engaging instructional methods, and the promotion of ongoing professional learning throughout a teacher's career. These inferred solutions highlight the structural dimensions of reform that students—though implicitly—call for.

In response to the research question “How do students perceive the quality of English language teaching in Bangladeshi universities, and what challenges do they report,” my study reveals that the students participating largely view English teaching as insufficient, constrained by both teacher limitations and institutional failures to support meaningful pedagogy. However, isolated positive experiences of a minority sub-group of students in this study point to the importance of clear instruction and adaptable teaching, even when fluency is lacking. Thus, my study contributes original insight into the everyday realities of English learning and teaching, offering an empirically grounded critique of the ELT system in Bangladesh. It emphasizes the

urgent need for sustained PD, coherent policy alignment across educational levels, and a re-evaluation of teacher recruitment and training in higher education.

Both PR and PB student participants identified significant shortcomings in teacher preparation and pedagogical adaptability, highlighting a shared concern that inadequate instructional quality hampers English language learning in Bangladeshi universities. Students across both sectors critiqued the overreliance on outdated methodologies and the lack of teacher training, as reflected in Faisal's (PB) observation that instructors "do not prepare themselves to teach new ideas," and Nova's (PR) remark on the absence of organized materials. Similarly, participants in both groups noted limited integration of digital tools—Wasna (PR) lamented the lack of "digital tools like plagiarism checkers," while Shuvo (PB) observed that "teachers do not learn technologies." These perspectives suggest a convergence in recognizing systemic and pedagogical deficits as critical impediments. These perspectives suggest a convergence in recognizing systemic and pedagogical deficits as critical impediments to effective English instruction. No significant differences were observed between PR and PB participants in relation to their critiques of teacher fluency, with both groups citing concerns about code-switching and limited communicative competence.

However, disagreements emerged in students' perceptions of instructional clarity and adaptability. Tamanna (PR), for instance, viewed her instructors as "clear" despite their lack of fluency, suggesting that effective communication was still achieved in her context, whereas Zarif (PB) emphasized the persistence of foundational gaps, arguing that teachers "must address earlier gaps due to the system's interconnection." In addition, PR participants more frequently reported individual adaptation and initiative, such as Peuli's (PR) emphasis on personal effort to compensate for prior deficiencies, whereas PB students like Rafi focused on institutional failures

and advocated for structural interventions such as “bridging courses.” No significant differences were observed between PR and PB participants in relation to their critiques of teacher fluency, with both groups citing concerns about code-switching and limited communicative competence. These comparative insights reflect context-specific dynamics in private and public institutions, underscoring the need for differentiated policy responses and teacher development strategies tailored to institutional realities.

Theme 3: Pedagogical Rigidity and Lack of Instructional Diversity

This section examines student perceptions of English language pedagogical practices within Bangladeshi higher education, with a focus on instructional flexibility and responsiveness to diverse learner needs. Participants consistently described a lack of variety in teaching methods and minimal adaptation to student learning preferences, revealing widespread student dissatisfaction with the dominance of traditional lecture-based instruction. This third theme and its corresponding analytical codes are presented in Table 15 below.

Table 15

Summary Table of Codes for Theme 3: Pedagogical Rigidity and Lack of Instructional Diversity

Theme 3: Pedagogical Rigidity and Lack of Instructional Diversity	Frequency
3.1 Overreliance on lecture-based teaching	High
3.2 Lack of multimodal or technology-integrated instruction	High
3.3 Student preference for interactive and visual learning	High
3.4 Lack of learner-centered planning	High
3.5 Neglect of learner preferences and diversity	High
3.6 Teacher resistance to updating methods	Medium
3.7 Inconsistent implementation of participatory methods	Medium

In response to interview questions regarding learning styles, strategies, and teaching methods, students participating in this study emphasized a lack of variety in their teachers’ approaches to teaching English in university classrooms, limited responsiveness to their learning preferences, and an overreliance on traditional instructional approaches. Rafi (PB) noted the

inconsistent integration of participatory learning techniques, stating, “Some teachers try to encourage pair work and participation, but most rely on authoritative lecturing with inconsistent opportunities for practice.” Saima (PR) commented on the limited use of engaging instructional tools, remarking, “Our university classes are mostly bookish and boring; while some faculties show short videos, interactive methods like movies or games are absent—those are only used in English medium schools for younger learners.” Sunjida (PR) articulated students’ unmet expectations for adaptive teaching practices, asserting, “I feel our preferences are never considered as teachers use their own styles. As English department students at a top university, we expect more support, like visuals and diverse methods, since we struggle with speaking and writing.” Khaled (PR) pointed out the positive impact of multimodal and collaborative approaches, noting, “In my ‘Introduction to Drama’ course, our teacher used videos, group work, and acted out scenes, while others assign printouts and research tasks—these methods make learning far more engaging and interesting.” Zarif (PB) expressed concern over pedagogical stagnation, sharing, “I agree with my group members—many teachers, once they become professors, stop updating their knowledge and continue using outdated methods.” Wasna (PR) from East West University emphasized the value of creative and technology-integrated activities over rote learning, stating, “In my English classes, I value combining visuals and technology over solely reading books; while some teachers emphasize strict book use, I prefer creative tasks like film analysis, as research and active engagement matter more than memorization alone.”

Rafi’s (PB) observation foregrounds a critical issue in higher education pedagogy: the disjunction between limited participatory attempts and an overarching adherence to lecture-based delivery. His comment underscores that although some educators recognize the importance of collaborative learning, these efforts remain sporadic and unsystematic. This inconsistency

potentially undermines student engagement and the development of communicative competence, especially in ESL contexts where interactive practice is vital. Rafi's (PB) remarks resonate with broader student concerns regarding the inadequacy of experiential and interactive learning, suggesting a pedagogical inertia that hampers teachers' responsiveness to diverse learning styles.

Students' perspectives further illuminate this problem. As Sunjida (PR) observes, "Some teachers do give too much lecture ... rather than letting us work things out for ourselves," highlighting a lack of opportunities for learner autonomy and active engagement. Tamanna (PR) similarly critiques the prevailing instructional approach, noting that "teaching mostly focuses on grammar rules and memorizing structures ... not actual use of language," thereby drawing attention to the disconnect between form-focused instruction and meaningful language use. Nakib (PR) adds that "some teachers ... just read from chapter one to chapter two ... not create a platform for discourse or dialogue," underscoring the absence of dialogic space within the classroom. Echoing this sentiment, Farhana (PB) asserts that "teaching should not be so boring that only the teacher will talk, and students will listen to them," reinforcing the call for more interactive and student-centered pedagogical practices.

Saima's (PR) account reveals a rigid boundary in pedagogical imagination within higher education, where multimedia and interactive strategies are viewed as juvenile or exclusive to early education. Her comments suggest that higher education has yet to fully embrace the motivational potential of multimodal, technology-integrated resources. This reinforces the perception of a "bookish" and didactic system that neglects affective and cognitive diversity among adult learners. The exclusion of such resources potentially alienates students and stifles their intrinsic motivation, especially for developing language fluency through contextualized and engaging content. Wasna (PR) similarly advocates for visual and technology-integrated learning

tasks, underscoring the pedagogical value of creative, research-oriented approaches that transcend rote memorization. Her juxtaposition of “strict book use” with “active engagement” reflects a broader student-driven demand for critical, authentic, and application-based learning experiences. Zarif (PB) affirms this position by stating, “I would be genuinely excited if teachers incorporated multimedia resources—such as films or YouTube videos, online quizzes or polls—into their instruction,” highlighting how such tools can enhance motivation and engagement. Tamanna’s (PR) reflection further reinforces this gap, noting, “We are only taught how to implement technology in English ... but [it is] not really used to teach us,” indicating a gap between theoretical exposure to technology and its practical application in the classroom teaching. Peuli (PR) attributes this resistance to a lack of teacher training and openness to pedagogical change, observing, “Technology plays a great role in teaching English ... but some teachers lack training and do not accept the change.”

In contrast, Khaled’s (PR) appreciation of multimodal and collaborative learning illustrates how dynamic instruction can enhance student engagement. The contrast he draws between dialogical and didactic methods or traditional and contemporary methods points to a pedagogical divide—some educators use more novel and contemporary teaching methods while others rely on more traditional and didactic routines. His comment underscores the efficacy of experiential learning in enhancing comprehension and motivation, aligning with the principles of CLT and eclectic approaches that draw upon various strategies to enhance language proficiency.

Sunjida’s (PR) emphasis on unmet learner expectations highlights the lack of learner-centered planning in instructional design. Her reflection also indicates a dissonance between student needs, particularly for visual scaffolds and support for productive skills—such as speaking and writing—and teacher autonomy, where educators continue to use self-directed,

possibly outdated pedagogies. This disconnect may stem from insufficient teacher training or limited exposure to differentiation in teaching methods, reinforcing the need for PD that prioritizes learner diversity and multimodal strategies. Student perspectives further corroborate this misalignment between English language teachers' instructional delivery and student preferences. Nova (PR) articulates a lack of consideration for individual learning preferences, noting, "Teachers assume everyone learns the same way—no one asked what we prefer." Iffat (PR) similarly points to a disregard for student input in instructional decisions, stating, "We have different ideas than the teacher, but they do not appreciate it ... they say stick to the book." Highlighting issues of inclusivity, Nujhat (PB) observes, "We are learning, but not everyone understands—our faculties do not always consider students from different educational backgrounds." Finally, Rafi (PB) underscores the absence of learner consultation in lesson planning, commenting, "It's not possible to plan lessons based on every student's strategy ... and they didn't ask either." His remark suggests that a course cannot be completely individualized, but if the teacher invited ideas from students, they could better meet the needs and preferences of students. Collectively, these reflections illuminate a persistent gap between pedagogical approaches and learner expectations, emphasizing the urgency of integrating student voices into instructional design.

Zarif's (PB) critique points to a systemic failure in sustaining pedagogical renewal among senior academics. The perceived reluctance or inertia in updating teaching approaches post-promotion reflects institutional gaps in continuing professional development (CPD). This stagnation not only diminishes instructional quality but also risks entrenching ineffective methods that fail to align with evolving learner needs or contemporary teaching principles. Evidence from participant accounts underscores these concerns. As Shuvo (PB) observes, "Some

teachers are not updating their knowledge,” highlighting a broader trend of pedagogical complacency among faculty members. Saima (PR) adds further weight to this critique, noting, “Our curriculum has not evolved; after comparing the current syllabus with earlier versions, I found that the materials remain largely unchanged.” This indicates a lack of curricular innovation that parallels the stagnation in teaching practices. Similarly, Nakib (PR) remarks, “They rely heavily on commonly used guidebooks or notebooks, rather than developing their own intellectually prepared teaching materials,” pointing to a dependency on pre-existing resources in lieu of intellectually rigorous creation of curriculum and instruction for teaching English. Collectively, these reflections illustrate how institutional deficiencies in CPD contribute to a persistent cycle of pedagogical stagnation.

Recent scholarship underscores that teacher training in Bangladesh—particularly at the university level—requires substantial reform, with government policies needing to align with 21st-century pedagogical demands. Despite policy commitments to CPD in the *National Education Policy 2010* and subsequent initiatives (M. Ahmed, 2024; Rahman, 2019), implementation remains slow, reflecting a broader institutional inertia rooted partly in the British colonial bureaucratic tradition, which fostered rigid, exam-oriented organizational cultures resistant to pedagogical renewal (*Education system*, 2018; Rahman, 2019). This inertia perpetuates outdated, lecture-based instruction and stagnant curricula, as noted in recent analyses of higher-education teacher preparation (Shahidullah & Rahman, 2022) and school-level professional development needs (Alam & Shengquan, 2019). Overcoming these challenges requires targeted policy reform, investment in contextually relevant CPD, and institutional willingness to break from entrenched colonial legacies in favour of learner-centred, innovative approaches (M. Ahmed, 2024).

The findings from this study suggest a noticeable disconnection within the sampled institutions between pedagogical practices and the learning needs described by participants in Bangladeshi higher-education ESL classrooms. Drawing on their classroom experiences, participants in this small-scale qualitative study frequently expressed frustration with what they perceived as an overreliance on lecture-based instruction and a lack of multimodal or learner-centered approaches. Rafi's (PB) reflection that "most rely on authoritative lecturing with inconsistent opportunities for practice" encapsulates a broader trend of pedagogical rigidity, where limited implementation of participatory strategies hinders the development of communicative competence.

This observed stagnation aligns with voices represented in the literature. According to Rahman et al. (2018b), ESL instruction in Bangladesh remains predominantly lecture-driven, often reducing learners to passive recipients rather than active participants. Despite national policies advocating for CLT, classroom realities still reflect a didactic orientation shaped by exam-oriented curricula and insufficient PD. Tamanna's (PR) remark that "teaching mostly focuses on grammar rules and memorizing structures" underscores this misalignment. Such findings are consistent with Cross et al. (2022), who emphasize a critical gap between curriculum understanding and actual teaching practice in ESL settings.

The absence of technology-mediated and multimodal teaching techniques, particularly at the higher-education level, represents another key concern. Students such as Saima (PR) and Wasna (PR) described their classes as "bookish and boring" and emphasized a preference for visual, creative, and technology-integrated tasks. Their critiques reflect a perception that higher education has not embraced pedagogical modernization. These findings partially diverge from existing literature that praises the potential of digital tools in enhancing ESL learning (Rahman et

al., 2021b), suggesting that while the policy infrastructure may support innovation, institutional implementation lags.

Zarif's (PB) comment—"many teachers, once they become professors, stop updating their knowledge"—points to institutions' tendencies to adopt insufficient CPD initiatives. This concern is substantiated by existing research. Wilson (2021) and Afroz et al. (2024) found that CPD in Bangladeshi higher education remains sporadic, underfunded, and often unavailable to rural or less-resourced institutions. Despite several high-profile initiatives such as ELTIP and TELSHEB, CPD remains primarily focused on secondary education, with limited impact on university-level ESL instruction (Ali et al., 2023; Ali & Hamid, 2021; British Council Bangladesh, 2024; Donohue et al., 2012; Rahman, 2021b). Furthermore, the institutional quality assurance cells (IQACs) introduced under HEQEP remain largely optional and underutilized, further limiting sustained pedagogical renewal.

From the lens of teacher preparedness, my study suggests that while some teachers possess academic qualifications, many lack practical pedagogical training or exposure to contemporary methodologies. Nakib's and Saima's observations about reliance on outdated materials and static syllabi reinforce this. Literature supports this critique: Das (2021) observed that many higher-education ESL teachers in Bangladesh enter classrooms without formal pre-service training, resulting in pedagogical approaches that default to rote learning and GTM.

Regarding teachers' English proficiency, while the study did not measure fluency directly, student accounts suggest a variable standard. The more pressing concern, however, lies in teachers' limited ability or willingness to operationalize their language skills through dynamic, student-centered pedagogy. As highlighted in the literature, teacher competence in English alone

does not translate into effective instruction unless complemented by methodologically sound practices and continuous professional learning.

Finally, the implications of this pedagogical inflexibility are far-reaching. Students like Sunjida and Nujhat emphasized that their needs—particularly related to speaking and writing—remain unmet, partly due to teachers' preference for traditional methods and partly due to the absence of learner input. These findings align with studies by Kader and Salam (2019), who highlight institutional disinterest in learner feedback as a systemic shortcoming in Bangladeshi higher education.

Across the students' interview data, a recurring pattern of dissatisfaction emerged concerning traditional, lecture-driven methods, alongside calls for more multimodal, interactive, and learner-responsive instruction. Although these views are not generalizable, they offer transferability to similar institutions and thereby reflect important experiential concerns in Bangladeshi universities. Notably, while a few participants shared isolated examples of effective and engaging pedagogy, such instances represented minority voices, rather than consensus among students. Overall, the findings highlight inconsistent implementation of eclectic or communicative practices, teachers' reluctance to change, and the absence of institutional structures for continuous pedagogical innovation.

In response to the interview question regarding learning styles, strategies, and teaching methods, students conveyed a unified expectation for diverse, participatory, and differentiated instruction that addressed both cognitive and communicative challenges. These findings contribute critical insights to the literature by highlighting not only the potential of eclectic approaches but also the institutional and cultural obstacles impeding their widespread adoption in Bangladeshi higher education.

The analysis of student perspectives across private and public universities revealed several points of agreement and disagreement in their experiences with English language instruction. Both PR and PB participants consistently critiqued the predominance of traditional, lecture-based pedagogy, expressing frustration with minimal instructional variety and limited responsiveness to diverse learner needs. For instance, Rafi (PB) stated, “most rely on authoritative lecturing with inconsistent opportunities for practice,” while Sunjida (PR) observed, “Some teachers do give too much lecture ... rather than letting us work things out for ourselves.” These comments illustrate a shared perception of pedagogical rigidity across institutional types. Similarly, participants from both groups lamented the lack of learner-centered planning and insufficient consultation regarding learning preferences. Zarif (PB) and Nova (PR), for example, noted that instructors often assume uniform learning styles without seeking student input.

However, key differences between PR and PB students’ comments also emerged. PR participants more frequently described isolated instances of innovative instruction and expressed higher expectations for multimodal and interactive learning. Khaled (PR) reflected positively on a course utilizing videos and group work, contrasting it with more conventional classes that “assign printouts and research tasks.” In contrast, PB students like Zarif and Shuvo emphasized institutional inertia and noted that faculty members “stop updating their knowledge” after promotion, pointing to systemic constraints in PD. Additionally, PR students like Saima and Wasna highlighted the disparity between theoretical exposure to technology and its actual pedagogical application, underscoring a perceived disconnect between curricular content and instructional practice.

No significant distinctions were observed between PR and PB participants in relation to their critique of grammar-focused instruction and the perceived ineffectiveness of rote learning

strategies. Both groups expressed a desire for greater authenticity, interactivity, and engagement in classroom practices. These findings, while not generalizable beyond the sampled contexts, illuminate important experiential patterns shaped by localized institutional cultures and pedagogical norms within Bangladeshi higher education.

Theme 4: Marketization Undermines Pedagogical Integrity in English Education

This section presents findings drawing on student reflections to illustrate how institutional priorities driven by commercial imperatives compromise pedagogical quality and equity in Bangladeshi universities. The analysis identifies concerns reported by participants, such as the prioritization of profit over learning, lack of teacher accountability, curricular misalignment with socio-cultural contexts, and restrictive academic policies. These issues, present across both public and private institutions, highlight systemic barriers to effective English language education and expose how institutional frameworks contribute to student disengagement, inequity, and pedagogical inefficacy. The fourth theme and codes used to analyze the data are presented in Table 16 below.

Table 16

Summary Table of Codes for Theme 4: Marketization Undermines Pedagogical Integrity in English Education

Theme 4: Marketization Undermines Pedagogical Integrity in English Education	Frequency
4.1 Institutional prioritization of profit over learning	High
4.2 Mismatch between curriculum and socio-cultural context	High
4.3 Lack of teacher preparation and accountability	High
4.4 Delayed results and administrative dysfunction	Medium
4.5 Restrictive academic gatekeeping policies	Medium
4.6 Ineffectiveness of grammar-based foundational courses	Medium

Student reflections highlight structural, curricular, and pedagogical limitations related to English education across private and public universities in Bangladesh. According to Tamanna

(PR), intense academic workloads and institutional priorities raise concerns about the quality of education, as she explained: “Intense time constraints and numerous assignments and assessments within a four-month term create substantial pressure, often leading students to feel that institutional profit is prioritized over authentic educational engagement.” Faisal (PB) pointed out the dysfunctionality of academic management in public institutions, remarking, “I often feel my university fails as a proper academic institution; I once received exam results nine months late, and such delays, along with extended sessions and scheduling issues, frequently disrupt students’ academic progress, especially in public universities.” Khaled (PR) commented on the restrictive academic policies within private institutions, stating, “Our university is private, so they structured the rules to prevent students from bypassing English courses; we were required to take three non-credit English courses before being allowed to register for core courses.” Iffat (PR) highlighted the mismatch between course content and learners’ socio-cultural contexts, observing, “Our social context does not match with the materials and lessons of English language courses used by our teachers. Some students take it negatively after the class.”

Several other students contributed thoughtfully articulated perspectives on their experiences with English language education, further highlighting systemic and pedagogical shortcomings across institutional contexts. Zarif (PB) criticized the lack of teacher preparedness and institutional oversight in public universities, stating, “Teachers do not even take preparation ... they just come with a book in the class and ... read or tell us to read ... and go away. ... There is no accountability to the administration and students in public universities.” Nujhat (PB) emphasized the need for culturally relevant teaching materials, asserting, “Foreigners entirely author the materials currently in use. If teachers were to adapt some of these texts to reflect Bangladeshi culture better, the outcomes could be significantly improved.

Academics should take the initiative to address this need.” Finally, Wasna (PR) questioned the effectiveness of current foundational English courses and proposed alternatives more aligned with students’ actual skill development needs, explaining, “I questioned the effectiveness of revisiting grammar in just three or four months as a short course after 12 years of study and suggested that non-credit skill development courses would be a more beneficial alternative to mandated foundational subjects.” In response to interview questions regarding the need for teachers to improve their teaching practices and materials, the use of Western textbooks versus context-specific resources, the extent of teachers’ preparation for lessons, and whether universities provide English language courses that adequately support academic success, the focus-group students expressed significant concerns about teacher under-preparedness, lack of institutional accountability, the cultural inappropriateness of teaching materials, rigid and repetitive curricular structures, and overarching institutional priorities that collectively undermine pedagogical effectiveness.

The student reflections collectively unveil a troubling disconnect between the formal goals of English language education in Bangladeshi universities and the lived realities within both public and private institutions. Tamanna (PR), a private university student, describes how the institutional prioritization of profit manifests in overwhelming academic workloads within compressed terms. Her perception that institutional profitability supersedes meaningful educational engagement underscores a shift from pedagogical integrity to neoliberal commodification, where education is treated as a market product. This concern is not isolated. Faisal, from a public university, highlights how bureaucratic inefficiency, such as receiving results nine months late, undermines students’ academic progress and confidence in institutional accountability. His comment illustrates a systemic dysfunction within public education

governance. Similarly, Rafi, also a public university student, points to a profound lack of instructional engagement, stating: “Only 2 percent of the syllabus is covered by the teachers ... the remaining 90 percent is left to us,” which he sees as indicative of a commercialized model of education. This sentiment is reinforced by Zarif (PB), who reflects on the reductive nature of exam preparation: “We get only six topics before the exam ... we just memorize and write them down, as if education is a product to be consumed and delivered.” Finally, Sunjida, a private university student, describes how exam-centric instruction undermines deeper learning: “We were mostly focused on how to do well in the exam ... did not get to enjoy or apply the course.” Together, these student testimonies illuminate a pattern of institutional practices that prioritize efficiency and profit over meaningful learning, thereby challenging the foundational purposes of higher education in Bangladesh.

Khaled’s (PR) remark about mandatory non-credit English courses reflects how academic regulations in private institutions may serve as gatekeeping mechanisms, impeding students’ access to core academic content. His experience reveals institutional inflexibility that prioritizes control over responsiveness to learners’ competencies. Similarly, Iffat (PR) critiques the misalignment between course materials and students’ socio-cultural contexts, identifying some foundational English courses as “gatekeeping.” Her frustration resonates with Nujhat’s (PR) argument for culturally relevant teaching materials, asserting that current English textbooks authored solely by foreigners fail to reflect Bangladeshi realities. This mismatch not only limits relevance but fosters alienation, suggesting that the cultural inappropriateness of content may inhibit learner engagement. This concern is echoed by several students who highlight how curriculum design often fails to acknowledge their prior knowledge or learning contexts. As Wasna, a private university student, explains, “Some materials are designed with content

irrelevant to our context ... we already know them—why should we learn the same thing again?” Nova, also from a private institution, reinforces this point: “Many of our mandatory foundational courses repeated content we had already studied for 12 years—what is the point of being required to do it again in just 4 months?” Wasna, meanwhile, challenges the structure of foundational English courses, questioning the utility of grammar-focused short courses after 12 years of study and advocating for practical, skill-based instruction. Peuli (PR) adds a perspective on pedagogical rigidity, stating, “Teachers do not accept change—they are comfortable with GTM even after 20 months of online experience during COVID-19.” Lastly, Shuvo, a public university student, comments on the inflexible course structure: “Courses are mostly fixed—we don’t have the choice to skip a topic or delay a difficult one.”

The critique of pedagogical practices in Bangladeshi universities is further sharpened by accounts highlighting a pervasive lack of institutional accountability and instructional engagement. Zarif, a public university student, underscores this concern by noting that “teachers do not even take preparation,” a comment that reflects systemic pedagogical neglect. This sentiment is echoed by Rafi, a public university student, who observes that “teachers do not face any pressure to improve—they are never questioned or challenged by the institution,” pointing to an entrenched absence of evaluative mechanisms. Similarly, Khaled, a private university student, remarks that “some teachers miss months of classes—there is no one to hold them accountable,” further illustrating the widespread institutional failure to enforce professional standards across university types. The consequences of this accountability gap are particularly evident in student learning experiences. Farhana, a public university student, explains that “they give us assignments, and we just do it—there is not much feedback or checking afterwards,” suggesting a disengaged instructional approach that undermines student development. Likewise, Nujhat

(PB) notes that “our teachers are very busy, but some students need more time and questions—they don’t get that chance,” emphasizing the lack of individualized academic support. Together, these accounts depict a troubling pedagogical environment where minimal oversight and scarce student-teacher interaction hinder meaningful learning outcomes.

While these comments may not reflect all students, they are representative of the English language experiences of Bangladeshi university students, and they provide contextually rich insights into the participants’ experiences within the specific institutional settings they attend. In my study, the findings provide clear evidence of a persistent misalignment between curricular intent and pedagogical practice in Bangladeshi higher education, particularly in the domain of English language education. Across both public and private universities, students consistently report that English courses are poorly contextualized, excessively rigid, and inadequately executed. These issues reflect broader structural and ideological challenges, including the effects of neoliberal policy reforms and institutional marketization.

As noted in Rahman and Pandian (2018), CLT was introduced in Bangladesh to modernize English instruction. However, decades later, this shift remains largely superficial. Findings from my study, such as Zarif’s (PB) comment on unprepared instructors, align with Rahman and Pandian’s (2018) observation that inadequate teacher training and weak institutional oversight continue to hinder CLT’s efficacy. Similarly, the critique that foundational English courses do not match students’ socio-cultural realities echoes concerns raised in Ali and Hamid (2022), who argue that neoliberal orientations in ELT commodify English as human capital while neglecting learner agency and contextual needs.

This market-oriented logic is particularly evident in private universities, where the commercialization of education frequently prioritizes profit over pedagogy (Ahmed, 2016; Kabir

& Islam, 2023; Roshid & Sultana, 2023). Tamanna's (PR) perception that institutional structures prioritize profitability over genuine learning strongly supports Ahmed's (2016) argument that private universities are increasingly governed by market rather than academic principles. Furthermore, Kabir and Chowdhury (2021) critique the neoliberal planning embedded in Bangladesh's higher-education governance, describing how the pressure to maintain enrolment and revenue growth can erode quality assurance. The present data corroborate this trend: the constraints on course flexibility and excessive assessment loads mirror neoliberal academic approaches that prioritize efficiency and output over pedagogical depth.

Additionally, Ali and Hamid (2022) document how ELT has become a tool for economic development rather than educational empowerment. This trend is evident in the emphasis on employment-oriented curricula, yet, ironically, foundational courses remain ineffective, echoing Wasna's critique. This contradiction suggests that despite policy intentions to build employable human capital, pedagogical practices fail to equip students with relevant language skills.

Notably, my study surfaces nuances underrepresented in prior research conducted in Bangladesh. While existing literature addresses broad failures in English course delivery, it tends to generalize learner responses (Akteruzzaman & Sattar, 2020). My qualitative data offers grounded, differentiated insights: for example, Khaled's (PR) comments on course structuring illustrate how regulatory inflexibility disproportionately affects learner progression, while Iffat and Nujhat (PB) emphasize cultural exclusion in curricular content. These perspectives underscore the need to contextualize ELT both socially and institutionally.

Although these findings do not claim general applicability, they offer a nuanced understanding of how neoliberal pressures and pedagogical inflexibilities may be experienced at the student level in ELT in Bangladeshi universities. Students describe institutional practices that

constrain authentic engagement with the language, such as rigid course requirements, disconnected content, pedagogical negligence, and an overemphasis on form over function.

These experiences point to a system wherein entrenched structural and pedagogical barriers undermine the promise of English as a tool for upward mobility. The findings suggest that students across both sectors perceive English education as obligatory yet unproductive—a paradox that speaks to broader issues of policy-practice disconnect. While the marketization of higher education has advanced English as a commodity, it has not concurrently ensured that the teaching of English is context-sensitive, engaging, or effective.

This study offers significant insights by foregrounding student perspectives that vividly illustrate how broad policy shortcomings manifest at the micro level. It highlights the pressing necessity for policy realignment, pedagogical transformation, and integrating culturally responsive materials to ensure that English education in Bangladesh becomes genuinely empowering rather than structurally exclusionary.

Both PR and PB participants voiced critical concerns regarding the pedagogical limitations and institutional structures of English language education, revealing several points of convergence. Across both contexts, students reported a lack of teacher preparedness and minimal institutional accountability. Zarif (PB) observed that “teachers do not even take preparation,” a sentiment echoed by Khaled (PR), who noted, “some teachers miss months of classes—there is no one to hold them accountable.” This shared perception points to systemic deficiencies in instructional oversight across sectors. Similarly, critiques of culturally irrelevant curricula emerged among student participants in both settings. Iffat (PR) and Nujhat (PB) each highlighted how English course materials, authored exclusively by foreigners, failed to reflect Bangladeshi socio-cultural realities. No significant differences were observed between PR and PB student

participants in relation to the theme of inadequate teacher engagement. However, points of divergence also emerged. PR participants, such as Tamanna, emphasized the burdensome academic workload and institutional profit motives, stating that “numerous assignments and assessments within a four-month term create substantial pressure,” signaling a market-driven educational environment. In contrast, PB students frequently cited bureaucratic inefficiencies and structural disorganization. Faisal (PB) recounted receiving exam results nine months late, describing public universities as failing to function as “proper academic institutions.” Moreover, PR students like Khaled expressed frustration with rigid gatekeeping policies requiring multiple non-credit English courses before progression, whereas PB students were more likely to highlight a lack of individualized academic support and pedagogical feedback. These differentiated critiques reflect the distinct institutional cultures shaping student experiences in each sector, illustrating how neoliberal and bureaucratic forces uniquely constrain pedagogical quality in Bangladeshi higher education.

Conclusion

This chapter reported on the focus-group interviews used to explore the perspectives of 15 student participants from five Bangladeshi universities regarding their experiences with English language learning and instruction. The findings reflect a shared recognition of English as a critical resource for academic success, career advancement, and global mobility. Students consistently framed English as both a practical requirement and a symbol of socio-academic legitimacy. At the same time, they identified persistent systemic and pedagogical challenges—particularly in relation to teacher preparation, language proficiency, instructional rigidity, and the limited contextual relevance of course materials. While a few participants noted instances of effective and engaging instruction, such experiences were exceptions. Across institutional types,

students described a lack of responsive teaching practices, insufficient integration of technology, and minimal learner input. These concerns were often compounded by broader structural issues, including institutional gatekeeping, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and the perceived prioritization of institutional interests over meaningful learning. Although the small sample size and qualitative design preclude generalization, the findings offer context-specific insights transferrable to similar institutional contexts into how students experience and interpret English education within the constraints of Bangladeshi higher education. Altogether, these accounts illuminate the gap between curricular aspirations and classroom realities, underscoring the need for pedagogical, structural, and institutional realignment to better support students' language learning trajectories.

Chapter 7: Conclusions and Recommendations

This final chapter synthesizes the key findings of the study and outlines the implications for research, practice, and policy regarding ESL TPD in Bangladeshi universities. Drawing on rich qualitative data from 19 teachers and 15 students across two public universities and three private universities, the chapter begins by summarizing participants' experiences and perceptions of current PD provisions, highlighting a recurring theme revealing underdevelopment, misalignment with pedagogical needs, and institutional neglect. These concluding statements respond directly to the core research questions, illuminating the complex dynamics that shape PD experiences in the Bangladeshi higher-education context.

Following this synthesis, the chapter discussion turns to the study's contributions to research, theory, and practice. It discusses how the findings extend existing scholarship on teacher development, particularly within neoliberal educational settings, and challenge dominant assumptions about PD delivery in global-south contexts. Next, the chapter identifies specific gaps in the literature that the study addresses, particularly the lack of research on university-level ESL PD and student perspectives on English language instruction. It then situates these findings within relevant theoretical frameworks, including critiques of neoliberalism and the reconceptualization of TPD as a process of professional learning and reflection. Building on these insights, the chapter offers practical implications for designing more inclusive, context-sensitive PD programs, and recommended directions for future research that can further inform policy and institutional reform. The chapter concludes by presenting the limitations of the study and providing a final summary that highlights the importance of sustained, locally responsive, and teacher-informed PD in Bangladeshi higher education.

Concluding Statements

Bangladeshi university ESL teachers' perspectives on their PD needs and their views about the role of public and private universities in providing PD reveal a complex interplay of unmet expectations, structural constraints, and contextual demands. Teachers participating in this study perceive PD as essential for enhancing instructional practices and adapting to evolving pedagogical standards. However, they report limited institutional support and a lack of formal PD initiatives. To address the overarching question—what are Bangladeshi university ESL teachers' perspectives on their PD needs, and what are their views about the role of public and private universities in providing PD for them?—participant teachers view their development as insufficiently prioritized in both public and private institutions. They describe a fragmented PD landscape in which public universities often lack the resources and administrative structures to deliver ongoing PD, while private universities may offer training sporadically but are often driven by reputational or market concerns rather than pedagogical goals. Teachers expressed a shared need for sustained, practice-oriented, and context-sensitive PD that aligns with their day-to-day instructional challenges.

In response to the research question “What are ESL teachers' perceptions of PD and training in universities in Bangladesh?” it can be concluded that the ESL teachers in Bangladeshi universities represented in this study generally perceive PD as an essential yet under-provided element of their teaching careers. Teacher participants view PD as crucial for enhancing instructional practices, staying current with pedagogical trends, and improving student learning outcomes. However, there is a prevailing sense of dissatisfaction among them due to the lack of formal, consistent, and context-specific PD programs within both public and private universities. Many of the teachers taking part in this study reported that institutional offerings are limited to

occasional workshops or seminars, often misaligned with their actual teaching needs. While some participants expressed appreciation for sporadic training efforts, the overall perception is that universities that employ this study group of teachers do not prioritize structured or sustainable PD, thereby limiting teachers' professional growth and their capacity to address evolving educational demands.

Regarding the question "What are teachers' perspectives on the PD needs of university ESL teachers in Bangladesh?" teacher participants overall highlighted the necessity for PD programs that are tailored to the contextual realities of Bangladeshi higher education. There was consensus that training should move beyond generic, theory-based sessions toward practical, skill-oriented programs that focus on classroom management, communicative language teaching, digital literacy, and student engagement strategies. Teachers in this study identified a clear demand for continuous and collaborative PD approaches that incorporate peer learning, mentoring, and reflective practice. Many in the participant teacher group also underscored the importance of institutional support in reducing workload and providing time and resources for sustained professional learning. These insights highlight the gap between existing PD provisions and the actual developmental needs of ESL teachers in this study, calling for a strategic and needs-responsive approach to professional development design.

Addressing the question "What are students' perspectives on English language teaching in universities in Bangladesh?" student participants in this study reported concerns regarding the effectiveness of English language instruction, citing outdated teaching methods and insufficient opportunities for meaningful communication practice. They often perceived classroom instruction as overly didactic, with limited use of interactive or student-centered approaches. Student participants expressed a desire for their English language teachers to incorporate more

communicative techniques and real-world applications of the English language. Additionally, disparities between the public and private institutions these students attended were noted, with students enrolled in private universities generally reporting better access to resources and more English immersion. These findings suggest that students recognize the crucial role of effective ELT in their academic and professional futures, underscoring the need for instructional reforms that better align with contemporary language learning needs.

When considering the question “What do ESL teachers think about how their context and beliefs can be used to shape their PD programs?” the teachers who joined this study highlighted that their PD should be informed by their lived experiences, teaching contexts, and educational beliefs. They advocated for context-sensitive PD approaches that consider local challenges, such as large class sizes, limited resources, and socio-economic disparities among students. Many participants suggested that PD programs would be more effective if they acknowledged and integrated teachers’ existing knowledge, cultural context, and pedagogical values. It can be inferred that teachers are not passive recipients of externally designed training but seek to co-construct PD experiences that resonate with their classroom realities and professional identities.

Regarding the question “Which PD initiatives are ESL teachers engaged in within Bangladeshi universities?” it can be concluded that formal PD initiatives are limited, and where they exist, they often fail to meet teachers’ expectations. Most participants reported engaging in informal professional learning, including self-study, peer collaboration, and utilizing online resources. Peer observation, collaborative lesson planning, and attending conferences or webinars were cited as common strategies for professional growth. However, these efforts are primarily self-initiated and lack institutional endorsement or support. This reliance on informal

mechanisms highlights a systemic shortfall in structured PD provision, reflecting the proactive role teachers assume in navigating their professional growth.

Finally, in response to the question “What new or alternative PD approaches or initiatives can be proposed for university English language teachers in Bangladesh?” participants proposed a range of alternative, contextually relevant PD approaches rooted in sustained, collaborative, and practice-based approaches. Suggestions included institutionalizing peer mentoring programs, conducting action research projects, maintaining reflective teaching journals, and establishing communities of practice. Teachers participating in the study recommended developing PD frameworks that are locally designed and facilitated, yet informed by global best practices. Emphasis was placed on embedding PD within regular teaching schedules and ensuring it is continuous rather than episodic. Teachers also advocated for the recognition and incentivization of PD participation to enhance engagement. These proposals underscore the need for a systemic overhaul of the current PD landscape, steering it toward inclusivity, contextual relevance, and professional agency.

This qualitative study, grounded in the experiences of 19 teachers and 15 students, provides an in-depth understanding of ESL TPD in Bangladeshi universities. While findings cannot be generalized to all higher-education contexts in Bangladesh, they offer valuable insights into the structural, pedagogical, and institutional gaps that constrain effective PD in this country that would be transferrable to similar higher-education sites. The study affirms the importance of teacher voice in shaping responsive and sustainable PD approaches and highlights the pressing need for institutional reform to support the professional growth of ESL educators in Bangladesh.

The Government of Bangladesh recently introduced a series of TPD initiatives in higher education through a combination of national and institutional policies aimed at fostering

responsive and sustainable practices. The UGC's Strategic Plan for Higher Education 2018–2030 prioritizes modern pedagogy and proposes a national-level University Teachers' Training Academy (UGC, 2018). In line with this plan, the Ministry of Education and UGC approved a national training institute (Jasim, 2021) and, under the Higher Education Acceleration and Transformation (HEAT) project, introduced mandatory basic training for new lecturers (UGC to hold basic training, 2024). Donor-backed initiatives, such as the Higher Education Quality Enhancement Project (HEQEP), have established quality assurance cells and faculty workshops (World Bank, 2018). At the institutional level, the Bangladesh University of Professionals offers the Post Graduate Diploma in Higher Education Teaching (PGDHET) to align with national reforms (Shahidullah & Rahman, 2022). However, these initiatives are addressed to all disciplines in general rather than ESL teachers specifically, which remains a far cry from meeting the targeted PD needs of university ESL teachers in Bangladesh. Collectively, these measures signal a shift toward more structured, policy-driven PD models that address both national priorities and the contextual needs of teachers in Bangladeshi universities.

Contributions to the Field

This study makes several important contributions to the field of TPD in ESL within the Bangladeshi higher-education context. From a research perspective, the study offers a comprehensive and contextually grounded examination of ESL teacher development in a setting where formal TPD is largely underdeveloped and unevenly distributed. Although the sample size is modest, comprising 19 university ESL teachers and 15 students, the qualitative depth and methodological rigor provide insightful perspectives into the lived experiences of the participants. These findings contribute to a deeper understanding of how educators navigate structural, institutional, and pedagogical challenges in Bangladesh's neoliberal educational

environment. This focus on a small-scale, experience-based inquiry aligns with Creswell and Guetterman's (2019) and Saldaña's (2011) emphasis on the value of qualitative research for illuminating complex phenomena in context.

In terms of practice, the study highlights the absence of structured, context-sensitive TPD programs and calls attention to the mismatch between teachers' professional needs and institutional offerings. The findings underscore teachers' desire for meaningful, continuous professional learning opportunities tailored to the Bangladeshi context—particularly in the areas of CLT, digital pedagogy, and inclusive instructional strategies. This evidence supports the need for locally grounded, practitioner-informed approaches to TPD that can be feasibly implemented in both public and private university settings. Such recommendations address systemic shortcomings in ESL instruction and professional support and offer actionable pathways for institutional reform.

On a theoretical level, the study operationalizes a critical framework rooted in neoliberal education policy (Levinsson et al., 2020) and academic capitalism (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2010). It applies these perspectives to interrogate how market-driven reforms shape teacher identity, access to PD, and the commodification of English language instruction. In this context, the analysis also highlights issues of teacher recognition and inclusion, along with the material and symbolic rewards linked to their work—especially salaries, job security, and overall job quality. These aspects are seen as essential for maintaining teacher motivation and professional identity, yet they are often compromised in neo-liberalized higher-education systems, where competitive market principles favor institutional profits over fair investment in human capital. By anchoring teacher development within these macro-level forces, the study not only validates but also extends theoretical models of neoliberalism's impact on education.

Building on this theoretical grounding, the findings constructively critique the limitations of one-size-fits-all, top-down PD policies, suggesting that teachers must be repositioned as agents of professional “decision-making” (Nezhad & Stolz, 2024, p. 1) rather than passive recipients of institutional mandates (Hagedoorn et al., 2023; Nezhad & Stolz, 2024). Achieving this shift requires embedding teacher agency into PD policy through participatory frameworks that prioritize teacher-led decision-making, collaborative professional learning communities, and context-responsive initiatives supported by institutional and policy mechanisms (Directorate of Primary Education, 2019; Nezhad & Stolz, 2024; M. Rahman, 2021). Universities’ PD entities—such as the Certificate in Teaching-Learning and Excellence in Teaching and Learning within the Institutional Quality Assurance Cell (CETL/ETL within IQAC)—can strengthen this by linking participation to recognition and incentives, allocating dedicated budgets and staff, and expanding peer-led formats over transmissive workshops (Ahmmed et al., 2023). Bangladeshi studies show that professional-learning-community-based lesson study and teacher-led action research enhance pedagogical decision-making, confidence, and adaptability, demonstrating how structured collaboration builds agency and supports sustained, impactful professional growth (Ahmmed et al., 2023; Nezhad & Stolz, 2024).

Further, this research responds to a growing and sustained call in recent scholarship for more situated, context-responsive studies in low- and middle-income countries, particularly in relation to teacher education and PD (Haßler et al., 2021; Nguyen et al., 2023). Nguyen and Dang (2019), for example, emphasize that second-language teacher education must be locally generated, culturally sensitive, and contextually aligned, reflecting the specific socio-cultural and institutional landscapes in which educators operate. Echoing this view, Hamid and Al Amin (2022) argue that PD in Bangladesh must be responsive to local constraints—such as large class

sizes, exam-oriented instruction, and limited institutional resources—rather than merely transplanting international approaches. By situating ESL teacher development within the lived experiences of Bangladeshi educators and students, this study contributes to this emerging body of literature and challenges the universal applicability of decontextualized PD frameworks.

Addressing Gaps in Existing Research

This study responds to several critical gaps in the literature on teacher development in Bangladesh. First, much of the extant literature tends to focus on school-level teacher training or generic pedagogical improvement initiatives, with limited attention paid to university-level ESL teaching in Bangladesh. My research addresses this gap by highlighting the voices of higher-education professionals, whose PD needs are often overlooked in policy and practice (Das, 2021; Donohue et al., 2012).

Second, the research addresses the absence of empirical studies on how neoliberal reform agendas intersect with PD infrastructures in Bangladesh's higher-education sector. As outlined in the dissertation's conceptual framework and supported by scholars such as Hamid and Al Amin (2022) and Kabir (2013), the findings demonstrate how privatization, marketization, and managerialism are reshaping institutional priorities, often at the expense of pedagogical investment. In this marketized landscape, escalating tuition fees in certain private institutions are not always matched by proportional improvements in pedagogical quality, which raise concerns over value for money and the commodification of degrees. This study thus contributes to emerging literature that critiques the erosion of educational equity and professional autonomy under neoliberal logics.

Additionally, this study foregrounds student perspectives on ELT quality, a dimension that is often neglected in PD research. Student focus groups revealed concerns about teacher

preparedness, relevance of instructional methods, and inequities in EMI environments, offering important corroborative evidence on the need for targeted PD. Integrating these perspectives supports a more holistic understanding of the pedagogical ecosystem and affirms calls in the literature for learner-informed educational reform (Sultana et al., 2022).

Relationship to Theoretical Frameworks

Theoretically, the study confirms and extends existing critiques of neoliberalism's influence on ELT. Participants' testimonies—concerning the lack of institutional support, the instrumentalization of English for market outcomes, and the precarity of teaching roles—are consistent with Levinsson et al.'s (2020) and Slaughter and Rhoades's (2010) conceptualizations of neoliberal academic governance. However, the findings also challenge certain deterministic readings of neoliberalism by demonstrating that teachers actively negotiate and sometimes resist institutional logics, seeking informal peer support and advocating for context-relevant practices.

Moreover, the study complicates the assumption that CLT, as a globally dominant ELT paradigm, can be seamlessly implemented in all settings. Participants revealed tensions between the ideals of CLT and the realities of large class sizes, exam-oriented curricula, and limited institutional training. These findings resonate with previous critiques (Chowdhury & Ha, 2008; Rahman et al., 2018a) and suggest that adaptation, rather than adoption, should guide PD design. Thus, the study advocates for a contextualized interpretation of CLT and related pedagogical frameworks that account for socio-political, institutional, and resource constraints.

Implications for Practice

The findings of this qualitative study underscore several actionable implications for enhancing ELT in higher education in Bangladesh through targeted, context-sensitive TPD. Although the research was conducted on a small scale, involving 19 ESL teachers and 15

students across five universities, it provides valuable insights into the local realities of TPD that can inform institutional planning and policy reform. Offering detailed descriptions and the potential for the transferability of findings to similar higher-education contexts, the study illuminates the situated experiences and perceptions of university-level ESL stakeholders, whose narratives reveal recurring structural and pedagogical challenges that warrant practical responses.

First, the study reveals a pressing need for the formalization and institutionalization of continuous TPD programs for English language teachers in Bangladeshi universities. Participants emphasized that, despite their strong commitment to professional growth, there is a lack of structured, university-led initiatives to support their development. Therefore, HEIs should develop sustainable TPD frameworks that offer both foundational and advanced training aligned with current pedagogical demands, including CLT, learner-centered methodologies, and digital literacy (Rahman et al., 2018a). These programs should be embedded within institutional routines and made accessible to faculty, reducing reliance on short-term, ad hoc workshops that offer limited practical benefits.

Second, contextual relevance emerged as a key theme from participants' accounts. Teachers of English as a second language expressed dissatisfaction with generic training approaches often borrowed from Western contexts, which fail to address local constraints such as large class sizes, outdated curricula, and limited technological infrastructure. TPD must therefore be locally designed and context-responsive, incorporating teachers' insights and grounded in the everyday realities of Bangladeshi classrooms (Hamid & Al Amin, 2022; Islam, 2021; Johnson, 2009; Sultana et al., 2022). This recommendation entails not only customizing content but also adapting delivery methods—for example, using blended learning or modular training formats that account for teachers' workload and time constraints. Resources to support locally designed,

context-responsive TPD in Bangladesh can be mobilized through national initiatives like the UGC's Strategic Plan for Higher Education 2018–2030 (UGC, 2018), targeted projects such as the Higher Education Acceleration and Transformation (HEAT) project establishing the University Teachers' Training Academy (Shahidullah & Rahman, 2022), and donor-supported programs including World Bank–funded quality assurance schemes. Institutional efforts, like postgraduate diplomas in higher-education teaching and Centers of Excellence in Teaching and Learning, also complement these funding sources (Raqib et al., 2024; Younus, 2023).

Third, the findings suggest the importance of collaborative professional learning communities. Many English teacher participants reported that, in the absence of formal training, they turned to peer support as a critical resource for navigating pedagogical challenges. Institutions should recognize and formalize these informal practices by establishing peer mentoring, teacher learning circles, and action research groups, which facilitate ongoing knowledge exchange and professional reflection (Díaz-Sacco & Muñoz-Salinas, 2024; Richards & Farrell, 2005). Such collaborative environments not only enhance instructional quality but also foster a culture of professional autonomy, agency, and mutual support.

Fourth, the study highlights the necessity of inclusive and equitable access to TPD, particularly for English language teachers in resource-constrained public universities or rural campuses. My research identifies disparities between private and public institutions in terms of access to PD resources and institutional support. To address this inequity, the UGC and other policy bodies should provide targeted funding and incentives to support under-resourced institutions and ensure that all teachers, regardless of institutional affiliation, can benefit from high-quality professional learning opportunities (Hamid & Al Amin, 2022).

Finally, there is a need for TPD programs that support English teachers' dual roles as instructors and knowledge producers. Participants expressed interest in engaging with scholarly literature and educational research but cited a lack of access and institutional encouragement. Facilitating teacher-led research, publishing opportunities, and academic writing workshops can help teachers become active contributors to ELT knowledge, thereby enhancing their professional identity and agency (Berhanu, 2024). Institutions should integrate teacher research as a core component of TPD frameworks, acknowledging its role in bridging theory and practice.

Overall, the findings advocate for a comprehensive, multi-level approach to PD in Bangladesh's higher-education system—one that centers teacher agency, contextual relevance, and institutional accountability. These insights, though based on a limited participant pool, offer a meaningful roadmap for educational stakeholders aiming to strengthen ELT quality through sustained, inclusive, and responsive TPD. Emerging evidence suggests that Bangladesh's government and higher-education authorities have begun to mobilize support for more equitable and context-responsive PD, yet the scale of these initiatives remains limited (T. Ahmed, 2024; Raqib et al., 2023; Shahidullah & Rahman, 2024). The UGC has developed a four-month induction program for new lecturers under the HEAT project and partnered with the Graduate Training Institute to offer foundational courses for staff at 20 public universities (Shahidullah & Rahman, 2024; *UGC to train*, 2024). The Post-Graduate Diploma in Higher Education Teaching indicates institutional willingness to establish comprehensive training programs (Shahidullah & Rahaman, 2022). However, studies show that PD centers depend on voluntary workshops, face low participation rates, and lack sufficient funding and networks (Raqib et al., 2023), while educators warn that many new lecturers lack pedagogical competence and formal training (T.

Ahmed, 2024). Therefore, despite promising efforts, sustained multi-stakeholder commitment and resources are still needed to create an effective PD system.

Limitations of the Conclusions

Several limitations must be considered when considering the conclusions of this study. As a small-scale qualitative inquiry, the findings are drawn from the experiences of 19 ESL teachers and 15 students across five Bangladeshi universities. While the sample includes participants from public and private universities, it remains limited in size and scope. As such, the conclusions are context-specific and transferable to similar contexts rather than generalizable to all HEIs in Bangladesh. The aim of qualitative studies is to increase understanding of the phenomenon under study rather than generate generalizable findings.

A primary limitation of this study is the reliance on a single researcher as the primary coder and interpreter of qualitative data. While every effort was made to ensure objectivity, including the use of member checking, researcher bias cannot be eliminated completely. The interpretative nature of qualitative research means that findings are inherently shaped by the researcher's theoretical lens and methodological choices. A more extensive coding team or the inclusion of inter-coder reliability strategies may have strengthened the validity of the conclusions.

The data were generated during the COVID-19 pandemic, which required all interviews and focus groups to be conducted online via Zoom from Canada. This approach enabled access to geographically dispersed participants but may have limited rapport, naturalistic interaction, and the observation of non-verbal cues—elements typically enriched through in-person qualitative research. Moreover, technological constraints, including connectivity issues and

varying levels of digital literacy, particularly among participants in rural or low-bandwidth areas, may have affected participation and compromised the richness and quality of the data.

While the research incorporates student perspectives through focus-group interviews, the participant sample is relatively small compared to the broader student population. Additionally, students from different socio-economic and linguistic backgrounds may experience ELT policies and instructional strategies differently. A more diverse sample, including students from regional institutions, could have provided a more comprehensive understanding of ELT challenges in Bangladesh.

Participants may have provided responses influenced by perceived expectations rather than their true experiences. While efforts were made to create a neutral and open discussion environment, social desirability bias remains a limitation in qualitative research. Future studies could mitigate this by incorporating anonymous survey methods to complement interview data.

Language may also have influenced the findings. All participants were speakers of English as a second or foreign language, and the interviews were conducted in English. Although most participants were fluent, nuances may have been lost or misinterpreted. Offering participants the option to respond in Bangla, or employing bilingual co-interviewers, may have captured additional depth and cultural specificity.

Lastly, the timing of the research—amid a global public health crisis—may have influenced participants' reflections on institutional support, access to PD, and broader challenges in higher education. Temporary disruptions rather than enduring conditions may have shaped some insights. Despite these limitations, the study offers contextually rich insights into ESL TPD in Bangladesh. It provides a foundation for future, broader inquiries and highlights critical issues that merit deeper investigation.

Recommendations for Future Research

This qualitative study offers an in-depth examination of ESL TPD within the higher-education sector in Bangladesh. Given the study's small sample size—nineteen teachers and fifteen students across five universities—the findings provide valuable yet context-specific insights into participants' lived experiences. As qualitative research does not aim to produce generalizable outcomes, the following recommendations are intended to build on the themes identified and support further contextual understanding and policy development in the field of teacher education in Bangladesh.

1. Expand Research to Diverse Institutional Contexts

Future studies should include a broader range of public and private universities across Bangladesh, particularly institutions in rural and peri-urban areas. The current research was limited to five universities, and expanding this scope could reveal institutional disparities and regional variations in TPD access and quality. Such comparative case studies could illuminate systemic inequities and inform more inclusive policy interventions.

2. Investigate Longitudinal Impacts of PD Initiatives

There is a need for longitudinal research that tracks the long-term effects of specific PD interventions on ESL teachers' instructional practices and professional identity development. Exploring how teachers engage with PD over time, and how such engagement influences classroom practices and student outcomes, would provide empirical grounding for sustainable PD approaches in the Bangladeshi context. Achieving sustainable, long-term PD engagement by teachers in Bangladesh requires multi-track interventions involving all key stakeholders—teachers, institutional leaders, policymakers, and training bodies. Coordinated policy frameworks, institutional support structures, and teacher-led initiatives are necessary to align PD

with contextual needs and ensure longitudinal impact (Mojumder, 2021; United Nations Global Marketplace, 2024). Qualitative research in Bangladeshi colleges further underscores the value of tailor-made, autonomous, and need-based training implemented through both micro-level (teachers and institutions) and macro-level (training providers and policymakers) actions to foster meaningful, sustained professional development (Mojumder, 2021).

3. Include Perspectives of Institutional Leaders and Policymakers

This study focused primarily on the perspectives of teachers and students. Future research could incorporate voices from university administrators, PD program designers, and policy stakeholders. Understanding institutional priorities, funding constraints, and governance challenges would help bridge the gap between teachers' professional needs and the structural realities of higher education.

4. Explore Student Learning Outcomes in Relation to TPD

Further research should investigate the relationship between TPD and student language learning outcomes. While this study included students' perceptions of ELT, future research might adopt a mixed-methods design to assess how various PD approaches correlate with improvements in students' communicative competence, engagement, and academic achievement.

5. Examine Informal and Peer-Based PD Practices

Many participants in this study described engaging in self-directed or peer-supported professional learning in the absence of formal institutional support. Future studies could explore how such informal PD practices evolve, what affordances and constraints they entail, and how they might be systematically supported or integrated into institutional frameworks.

6. Investigate PD for EMI in Non-English Disciplines

Given the increasing adoption of EMI in Bangladeshi universities, future research should examine the PD needs of faculty members in non-ELT disciplines. These instructors often lack formal language or pedagogical training to teach effectively in English. Understanding their challenges can inform the design of cross-disciplinary PD frameworks that address both language proficiency and subject-specific instructional strategies.

7. Explore Gendered Experiences of PD

This study did not specifically address gender dynamics in PD access or experiences. Future qualitative research could investigate how gender intersects with institutional culture, work-life balance, and PD participation, particularly in conservative or rural university settings. Such research could inform equity-focused PD policy design.

8. Critically Examine the Influence of Neoliberal Reforms

Given the study's theoretical grounding in neoliberalism and academic capitalism (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2010), further research should critically examine how market-driven reforms influence PD structures, teacher autonomy, and the commodification of English teaching in both public and private universities. Ethnographic studies could provide nuanced accounts of how these macroeconomic forces materialize in everyday pedagogical practices.

9. Evaluate Technology-Enhanced PD Approaches

With the growing role of digital tools in language education, future research should examine the effectiveness of online, blended, and mobile-supported PD initiatives in Bangladesh. Pilot studies evaluating such approaches could help identify scalable and cost-effective strategies for teacher development, especially in resource-constrained settings.

Closing Summary

This chapter presented key findings from interviews with Bangladeshi university ESL teachers and students, offering insight into their experiences and perspectives on PD and ELT. The thematic analysis revealed a strong interest among teachers in ongoing PD, coupled with an absence of formal, contextually appropriate PD initiatives. Teachers expressed a need for PD frameworks that are responsive to their institutional realities, resource limitations, and pedagogical goals. Likewise, students highlighted the significance of effective English instruction for academic success and socio-economic advancement, though they also acknowledged disparities in instructional quality across institutional types.

These findings underscore the urgent need to rethink existing PD provisions, particularly considering the neoliberal restructuring of Bangladesh's higher-education system. Results illustrate that while both teachers and students recognize the value of PD, structural, economic, and institutional constraints limit its accessibility and effectiveness. Importantly, the qualitative nature of this research—based on interviews with 19 teachers and 15 students—means that the conclusions are grounded in lived experience rather than statistical generalization. These participants represent a small, context-specific sample; thus, findings should be interpreted as contributing to an enriched understanding of the complexities surrounding PD in this setting, rather than as universally applicable claims.

By closely attending to the situated realities of ESL educators in Bangladesh, this concluding chapter advances a critical perspective on how PD might be redesigned to align with local needs. While limited in scope, this study contributes to ongoing discussions on the importance of sustained, context-sensitive, and practitioner-informed PD, particularly in low-resource, postcolonial educational contexts that navigate global pressures and local constraints.

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Appendix A: Semi-Structured Interview Protocol for Teachers

Preamble

This interview is designed to give you the opportunity to provide your perspectives and attitudes about the PD needs of higher-education ESL teachers in Bangladesh and your views of society, context, culture, and beliefs in framing the ESL PD approaches in Bangladesh. Most questions feature a sequence of prompts that are based on findings in the literature. In each interview context, these prompts may or may not be required. Interviews are therefore classified as “semi-structured” rather than “structured.” All questions are open-ended. Due to the nature of the interviews, the principal investigator will know the identities of the participants who consent to an interview. However, this information will be kept strictly confidential, and the names of participants will not be included in the interview transcripts or the dissemination of the research. During the interview process, a number of measures will be used to protect the participants’ identities; the researcher will use pseudonyms rather than your actual names, there will be no mention of your physical features or personal characteristics, and there will be no dissemination of your places of employment.

Please make sure that you have read, signed, and returned the consent form to the principal investigator before beginning the interview. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time during the data collection phase and/or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit without prejudice or consequence. If you choose to withdraw from the study before the data is analyzed and grouped in emergent themes, your data will be destroyed. If you withdraw after the data has been analyzed (approximately January 31, 2022, unless you are informed otherwise), it will not be possible to withdraw the data.

As a part of the member checking process, you will be emailed a copy of your interview transcript. You will have one week to specify any additions, deletions, or changes to the transcript and make any final comments from the date of the email sent. If you choose not to respond, it will indicate that you have no requests for changes and are satisfied with the transcript and consent to its use in the research.

Introductory Procedures & Comments

1. Thank you for your openness to potentially participating in this study.
2. Please feel free to ask if you have any outstanding questions regarding the study or the consent form.
3. Please be informed that the interview will be recorded for data collection purposes, but all collected data will be confidential.
4. Let me remind you of your basic rights during the interview process.
 - a. The interview is voluntary and can end upon your request.
 - b. You will be free to withdraw from the study before the completion of data analysis on January 31, 2022, and can withdraw from the study by contacting me via email, WhatsApp, or cellphone.
 - c. You have the right to pass on any question you feel you do not want to answer.
 - d. If you feel uncomfortable during the meeting, you have the right to leave or ask that the interview be paused.
 - e. It is quite acceptable to take a break at any time if necessary.
 - f. There are no right or wrong answers.

Interview Questions for Teachers

Part A: Demographics

1. How many years have you been teaching English? What level(s) do you teach?

Part B: Teachers' views about PD

RQ1: What are ESL teachers' perceptions about PD and training in universities in Bangladesh?

- a) What are your perceptions about ESL (English as a Second Language) teachers' PD and training in university teaching and learning in Bangladesh?
- b) What are your attitudes and beliefs about TESL (Teaching English as a Second Language) in university teaching and learning in the Bangladeshi context? You may discuss any topic related to TESL that comes to mind, including but not limited to curriculum, research, and materials in the setting where you work.
- c) How are these attitudes, beliefs, and TESL knowledge related to your views on university PD programs in Bangladesh?
- d) What would you suggest for English language enhancement and development of inclusive and interactive teaching methods in terms of PD in the Bangladeshi context?

RQ2: What are teachers' perspectives on the PD needs of university ESL teachers in Bangladesh?

- a) What are your perspectives on the PD needs of university ESL teachers in Bangladesh?
- b) How creating opportunities for PD can improve teaching and learning quality for university ESL teachers in Bangladesh?
- c) How does your university identify and address individual teacher needs? Was a needs assessment performed in your University for ESL teachers' PD, and were these needs addressed in your university? If not, should one be done?

- d) What would be your suggestion to develop novice and experienced ESL teachers' pedagogical and content knowledge to promote their PD?

RQ4: What do ESL teachers think about how their context and beliefs can be used to shape their PD programs?

- a) What is your opinion about the role of culture and society in shaping your PD as an ESL teacher?
- b) How does the context of language teaching impact PD?
- c) If you have any existing PD approaches for the university ESL teachers, do they promote culturally relevant teaching and socio-cultural awareness?
- d) How do you think English language teachers can incorporate students' backgrounds and cultural traditions in the English language curriculum to enhance teachers' teaching experiences and students' learning experiences? Please explain.
- e) Do you think textbooks and teaching materials in a language program should be context-specific? Why or why not?
- f) What is the role of the University Grants Commission of Bangladesh (UGC) in relation to teachers' training and professional growth?

RQ5: Which PD initiatives are ESL teachers engaged in within Bangladeshi universities?

- a) Did your university offer any training as a pre-requisite to taking up your teaching role?
- b) What are the goals and priorities for the development of ESL teachers at your institution?
- c) What kinds of organized ESL teacher-development activities have you found most useful in your career?
- d) Do you follow any framework or range of PD activities for your own PD? If yes, then please describe.

- e) Do you have any ongoing PD programs for ESL teachers at your university? Explore, specify.
- f) If you have any existing PD approaches for the university ESL teachers, is it a “western” or a “local” PD approach? If you already have an approach, how well does it fit the Bangladeshi ESL context?
- g) How much collaboration is there among ESL teachers in your institution? What forms does it take?
- h) How adequate are human resources for supporting ESL teacher PD in your university?
- i) What arrangements or systems are in place to support the development of ESL teachers at your university?
- j) Are there PD opportunities for both novice and experienced ESL teachers in your university?
- k) What are potential difficulties ESL novice and experienced teachers might encounter to promote their professional growth?
- l) Does the assigned workload at your university give you enough opportunity to work on your PD?

RQ6. What new or alternative PD approaches or initiatives can be proposed for the university English language teachers in Bangladesh?

- a) Do you feel that the ideas of teacher development groups, mentoring, guided participation, workshops, self-monitoring, teacher support groups, keeping a teaching journal, peer observation, teaching portfolios, team teaching, and action research can impact changes in your professional learning and growth? Why or why not?

- b) Under ideal circumstances, is there anything you might like to do differently as an ESL teacher at your university?

Additional Contextual and Exploratory Items (Applicable Across RQs)

- a) How does the current educational policy related to English language teaching and learning motivate you to seek PD?
- b) Based on your teaching and learning experiences, what pedagogical practices do you construct in response to students' English language learning needs?
- c) What role does reflection play in your PD and teaching? How do teachers systematically examine practice by collecting evidence about their teaching and learning impact PD and teaching?
- d) How do you keep current in your teaching practice? What English language teaching methods and/or approaches do you use/follow to teach ESL classes?
- e) What teaching resources do you make use of? Do you think your English language teaching methods and/or approaches are traditional or up to date? Please explain.
- f) How often do you review your own theories and principles of English language teaching?
- g) Do you feel that the commercialization and commodification of English language teaching in Bangladesh is an obstacle to developing teaching quality in higher education? Why or why not?
- Is there anything more you would like to tell me about ESL Teacher PD in Bangladesh or any of the topics we have discussed?
 - Do you have any questions or concerns you think I may have missed that you believe should be addressed? Would you be able to share them with me?

- Thank you for contributing to this study. Is there any other information that you would like to provide?

Appendix B: Focus-Group Interview Questions for Students

Preamble

This interview is designed to give you the opportunity to share your perspectives and attitudes on student English language needs; English language teaching materials and methods used by the ESL teachers; English medium instruction of teaching and learning; challenges of learning English in Bangladesh; the role of context and culture in English language education; and higher education policy in Bangladesh. All questions are open-ended.

Due to the nature of the interviews, the principal investigator will know the identities of the participants who consent to an interview. However, this information will be kept strictly confidential, and the names of participants will not be included in the interview transcripts or the dissemination of the research. During the interview process, a number of measures will be used to protect the participants' identities; the researcher will use pseudonyms rather than your actual names, there will be no mention of your physical features or personal characteristics, and there will be no dissemination of your places of employment.

Please make sure that you have read, signed, and returned the consent form to the principal investigator before beginning the interview. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time during the data collection phase and/or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit without prejudice or consequence. If you choose to withdraw from the study before the data is analyzed and grouped in emergent themes, your data will be destroyed. If you withdraw after the data has been analyzed (approximately January 31, 2022, unless you are informed otherwise), it will not be possible to withdraw the data.

As a part of the member checking process, you will be emailed a copy of your interview transcript. You will have one week to specify any additions, deletions, or changes to the

transcript and make any final comments from the date of the email sent. If you choose not to respond, it will indicate that you have no requests for changes and are satisfied with the transcript and consent to its use in the research.

Introductory Procedures & Comments

1. Thank you for your openness to potentially participating in this study.
2. Please feel free to ask if you have any outstanding questions regarding the study or the consent form.
3. Please be informed that the focus-group interview will be recorded for data collection purposes, but all collected data will be confidential.
4. Let me remind you of your basic rights during the interview process.
 - a. The interview is voluntary and can end upon your request.
 - b. You will be free to withdraw from the study before the completion of data analysis on January 31, 2022, and can withdraw from the study by contacting me via email, WhatsApp, or cellphone.
 - c. You have the right to pass on any question you feel you do not want to answer.
 - d. If you feel uncomfortable during the meeting, you have the right to leave or ask that the interview be paused.
 - e. It is quite acceptable to take a break at any time if necessary.
 - f. There are no right or wrong answers.

Focus-Group Interview Questions for Students

Part A: Demographics

Which year are you studying in?

Part B: Students' views about English language teaching and learning

RQ3. What are students' perspectives on English language teaching in universities in Bangladesh?

Student needs

- a) Why do you learn English?
- b) Do the English language lessons address your needs?
- c) Do you study English only for employment?
- d) To what extent your university provides the English language courses that you need to study successfully?

Learning styles, strategies, and teaching methods

- a) In English class, how do you like to learn best?
 - by conversations,
 - by games,
 - by pictures,
 - by films,
 - by video,
 - by reading.
- b) Do your teachers ask you about your learning styles and strategies to match the teaching methods and materials?
- c) Do they employ any alternative teaching strategies if one does not work?

- d) Do you like the teacher to explain everything to you?
- e) Do your teachers teach too much rather than let you work it out for yourselves?
- f) What kind of learning activities do your teachers employ?
- g) Do your teachers use individual work, like reading a comprehension passage and answering questions, doing exercises from a text or workbook, and composition and essay writing, to provide you with the opportunity to progress at your own speed and in your own way.
- h) To what extent the teachers are good at English?

Lesson

- a) Do the English language lessons arouse your interest in the subject matter?
- b) To what extent do the topics likely to engage you affectively and intellectually?
- c) Do you find your teacher with sufficient preparation for the lesson?
- d) Do your teachers do a suitable follow-up to the lesson?
- e) Are the lessons at an appropriate level of difficulty?

Medium of instruction

- a) Are you comfortable with learning through the medium of English, or do you think you would learn better through Bengali or the combination?
- b) Did sometimes lecturers switch to Bengali if they thought you did not understand?
- c) Are you sometimes allowed to ask questions or respond to questions in Bengali?

Reflection

- a) Do your teachers ever reflect on the idea of what beliefs do you hold about English language learning and teaching?
- b) Do you have chances to feedback to your teachers?

Group work/pair work

- a) Do you like to learn English by talking in pairs or/and, in a small group, or/and with the whole class?
- b) Do your teachers use group work and pair work to reduce the teacher's dominance over the class and increase the amount of student participation in the class?
- c) Do the teachers create opportunities for individual students to practice and use new features of the target language and give an active role in learning?
- d) Does the English class promote collaboration among learners?
- e) Do you find your teacher work more as a facilitator and consultant or as a dictator?
- f) Does everyone in the class talk/participate with each other or only with the teacher?

Challenges of language learning

- a) Do you feel you are good at the English language you are learning? Why? Why not?
What are the challenges of learning English?
- b) What are some of the things you do not like about language lessons?
- c) What do you think teachers need to improve about teaching and materials?

Communicative teaching

- a) Are you encouraged to use the English language for communicative purposes?
- b) Are you using the language you learn outside the classroom?
- c) To what extent is meaningful communication performed in the language class?
- d) Are you able to contribute actively to the lesson?
 - a. Do your teachers encourage you to take part in an academic discussion and oral presentation in English?

Materials

- a) Do the English language teaching materials provide various opportunities to practice language skills that generally motivate you to improve your linguistic skills?
- b) Does the material provide a variety of activities and help you gain communication skills and facilitate long-term learning?
- c) To what extent do the materials likely encourage the learners to use the foreign language in real life?
- d) Do the teachers use western textbooks for teaching English, or they develop their context-specific materials? What do you prefer?

Context and culture

- a) Is the context of the curriculum, teaching methods, and materials suitable for the learners?
- b) Do you think it is necessary to know about English-speaking cultures in order to speak English?
- c) Do your teachers teach you English culture?

Motivation

- a) Do teachers build opportunities for increasing student interest in their lessons?
- b) Do your teachers encourage you to think and focus on the lesson's content and encourage you to participate in a lesson?
- c) Do your teachers engage you in real-life tasks and help you get the maximum opportunity to get involved in the class?

Thank you for contributing to this study. Is there any other information that you would like to provide?

Appendix C: Consent Form for Teachers

**Title of the study: The Professional Development of English Language Teachers in
Bangladeshi Universities Under Neoliberal Reform: Perspectives of Teachers and Students**

Researcher's Contact Information

Md Shayeekh-Us Saleheen, Ph.D. candidate
Curriculum, Teaching and Learning
Faculty of Education
University of Manitoba
Email: salehems@myumanitoba.ca

Advisor

Dr. Francine Morin
Senior Scholar & Professor Emerita
Faculty of Education
University of Manitoba
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3T 2N2
Email: Francine.Morin@umanitoba.ca

Dear participant,

Thank you for taking part in this study about higher education level ESL (English as a Second Language) teacher professional development in Bangladesh. This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this

carefully and to understand any accompanying information. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to email Md Shayeekh-Us Saleheen at salehems@myumanitoba.ca.

General information: The purpose of this research is to examine higher education level ESL teachers' need for professional development (PD), how they define professional development, explore what professional development approaches they practice, and the role of society, context, and culture in framing their professional development approaches. The overall purpose is to encourage Bangladeshi ESL teachers to contribute to English Language Teaching (ELT) with their assumptions and principles that underlie the theoretical framework for shaping their PD. You have been identified to participate in this study because you match the recruitment criteria of being a faculty member of any rank at the university.

It should be noted that student feedback is critical to evaluate teacher professional development. Classrooms are not only places where students learn—they are also places where teachers can learn. A deeper understanding of students and student learning is an important dimension of understanding what is meant by teacher development. Therefore, students will be included as participants, and a focus-group interview will be conducted with them. A focus-group interview with students will be considered important in analyzing and evaluating teacher professional development in the Bangladeshi context.

Therefore, the research explores the critical perspective of ESL teacher professional development at higher education in Bangladesh. I believe that this study's findings will help ESL teachers contribute to English Language Teaching (ELT) with their assumptions and principles that underlie the theoretical framework for shaping their PD. It will also help inform future

policymaking to improve the quality of English language teaching and learning at Bangladeshi universities.

Interview: To complete this study, I am asking you to participate in a one-on-one interview. If you agree, you will take part in an individual semi-structured interview that will last between 1 to 2 hours. There are no known conflicts of interest in the conducting of this research study. The interview will be conducted in English and done by Zoom or telephone—whatever is convenient for you. Since both audio and video recording options are available for zoom, I will ask you to choose whether you want either an audiovisual interview or an audio interview and leave it to your absolute discretion. I might also ask for a follow-up interview to clarify anything I didn't understand in the first interview. You do not have to do this if you do not want to.

You will be asked to discuss the following topics: (1) attitudes and perceptions of Professional development (PD) and perceptions of TESL in Bangladesh; (2) Professional development needs and approaches in higher education; (3) PD program at the University and opportunities and challenges of PD; 4) the role of context and culture in PD; and 5) higher education policy in Bangladesh. Demographic information (only gender and designation) will also be collected to create a summary profile of participants.

The interview will be conducted at a convenient time of your choice. A copy of the interview questions will be emailed to the participants prior to the interview so that they can ask for clarification or refuse to take part or answer any or all questions and can make an informed decision in this regard. Five universities have been selected for this study, and only 4 teachers from each University will be interviewed based on who asks first. The researcher from Winnipeg, Canada, will conduct the interview. Please sign and return this letter to Md Shayeekh-Us Saleheen by email at salehems@myumanitoba.ca if you would like to participate in this

research. If you are unable to sign this form and return it by email, please email Md Shayeeekh-Us Saleheen and type that you agree to be a part of this research. I will clarify the study's nature and intent and how the data will be recorded and used either using the Zoom app or by phone when I email you to request your participation.

Anonymity or confidentiality: You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without citing a reason. You will be free to elaborate on and add any additional information that you think relevant. You may refuse to answer specific questions that I ask or may request to stop the interview and turn off the recording device at any time. I would not include your name or anyone's name when I type out what you said. You can withdraw from the study at any time, simply by contacting me via email at salehems@myumanitoba.ca. Should you choose to withdraw, your data will be destroyed. Participants can withdraw from the study at the time of the interview and before completing data analysis. After the data has been analyzed, it will not be possible to remove the participants' data. **The approximate date after which data will not be removed is January 31, 2022.** Your name and other information or email will not be shared with anyone else. The names of participants in this study will not be included in the dissemination of this research. With your permission, interviews will be audio or video recorded depending on the tool (Zoom or telephone) I use. I will then transcribe and use direct quotations. To protect your privacy, I will use codes instead of names. Hence, the transcripts will be labeled with a pseudonym like (A, B, C). If you have any questions about the study, please email Md Shayeeekh-Us Saleheen at salehems@myumanitoba.ca.

Data storage and access: Your data will be handled and stored confidentially. This means that your data cannot be traced back to you. The management of data (i.e., collection, storage, and retrieval) will begin during the interview and continue for the duration of data

analysis and the writing up of this study's findings. To organize the data, I will create a separate file for each participant. Data in all its forms will be stored in a safe, confidential location and not accessible to anyone other than myself as principal and sole investigator. All data that can identify participants, such as contact information, transcripts, interview guide, audio or video recordings, will be stored on an encrypted password-protected laptop and external hard drive and kept safe in a locked cabinet. The only individuals I can share the data with will be my thesis supervisor, Dr. Francine Morin. The part of the data my supervisor can access will be selected by me. If required, it can also be shared with the other two members of my Ph.D. advisory committee. Those who will have data access will respect the code of confidentiality and abide by the ethics board's regulations in maintaining the confidentiality and security of the data. After publication, only the necessary data to verify the study results will be kept and stored safely for a minimum of 10 years and deleted once it is no longer needed.

Feedback/Debriefing: Transcripts of your interview will be emailed to you to allow you to have the opportunity to evaluate the fairness and validity of your transcription. You will be asked to review your transcripts, and you will be allowed to add, remove, or modify content, as well as omit potentially identifiable remarks. It may take approximately thirty minutes to review the transcript. You will have one week to specify any additions, deletions, or changes to the transcript and make any final comments. If you choose not to respond, then it will indicate that you have no requests for changes and are satisfied with the transcript and consent to its use in the research.

Risks: There are always risks to taking part in the research. In this study, these risks are minimal, defined in the TCPS2 as the level of risk that might be encountered in everyday life.

The Tri-Council Policy Statement (TCPS2) is a Canadian guideline for the ethical conduct

of research involving humans and/or human biological materials. Participants in this study are minimally at risk as participation is voluntary, and results will only be reported in the final report and during dissemination in a generalized format. The interview questions for teachers (Appendix A) are related to teacher professional development and pedagogy, which are related to their profession. The interview questions for students are designed to know their needs and how those are addressed in ESL classes. Moreover, before the interview is conducted, you will be informed about their right to withdraw from the study at any time without citing a reason.

Potential Benefits: This study's findings will encourage Bangladeshi ESL teachers to contribute to English Language Teaching (ELT) with their assumptions and principles that underlie the theoretical framework for shaping their PD. Participants may benefit from the opportunity of sharing their perceptions about teacher professional development and can reflect on their experiences about ESL teaching practice, opportunities, and challenges of professional development at Bangladeshi universities. This might help them to plan their professional growth for the future. Again, this research can relate to international teacher education, enhancing and extending understanding of global approaches to teacher professional development. The professional expertise that the teachers will develop from the proposed program will guide them to create a platform for initiating a collaborative teacher development program in the Bangladeshi context. Student participants will know about their needs and how their needs are addressed in ESL classes.

Dissemination: If participants have indicated on the consent form that they would like to receive a copy of the results, a summary will be sent to them after completing the study. The findings of the study will be used for this research project and to inform my doctoral thesis. The findings will also be disseminated via presentations, conference papers, and publications. A short

report will be prepared to share with University Grants Commission of Bangladesh (UGC), Ministry of Education in Bangladesh, university administrators and policymakers, and educators. When study results are shared, all findings will be presented in a way that does not identify any participants. **Any publications will refer to the participants by their pseudonym or general descriptor. The reference quotations will be labeled with a pseudonym like (teacher, student). For example, “a teacher said...”, “a student said...”.**

Compensation: No compensation will be offered to participants.

Consent: Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and /or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

The University of Manitoba may look at your research records to see that the research is being done in a safe and proper way.

This research has been approved by the Research Ethics Board at the University of Manitoba, Fort Garry campus. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project, you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Officer at 204-474-7122 or HumanEthics@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and thus you may choose to withdraw from the study by contacting the researcher before the completion of the data analysis on January 31, 2022.

Your signature below indicates that you have received a copy of this consent form for your records.

I agree to participate in this research.

☐ **I would like to receive a summary of the final research report via email.**

I agree to:

Being audio recorded ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**

Being video and audio recorded ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No**

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher and/or Delegate's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Sincerely,

Md Shayeekh-Us Saleheen
Ph.D. candidate
Curriculum, Teaching and Learning
Faculty of Education
University of Manitoba
E: salehems@myumanitoba.ca

Appendix D: Consent Form for Students

Title of the study: The Professional Development of English Language Teachers in

Bangladeshi Universities Under Neoliberal Reform: Perspectives of Teachers and Students

Researcher's Contact Information:

Md Shayeekh-Us Saleheen

Ph.D. candidate

Curriculum, Teaching and Learning

Faculty of Education

University of Manitoba

E: salehems@myumanitoba.ca

Advisor

Dr. Francine Morin

Senior Scholar & Professor Emerita

Faculty of Education

University of Manitoba

Winnipeg, Manitoba R3T 2N2

Email: Francine.Morin@umanitoba.ca

Date:

Dear participant,

Thank you for taking part in this study about higher education level ESL (English as a Second Language) teacher professional development in Bangladesh. This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or

information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to email Md Shayeekh-Us Saleheen at salehems@myumanitoba.ca.

General information: The purpose of this research is to examine higher education level ESL teachers' need for professional development (PD), how they define professional development, explore what professional development approaches they practice, and the role of society, context, and culture in framing their professional development approaches. The overall purpose is to encourage Bangladeshi ESL teachers to contribute to English Language Teaching (ELT) with their assumptions and principles that underlie the theoretical framework for shaping their PD. You have been identified to participate in this study because you match the recruitment criteria of being a student of any academic year at the university.

Over the past thirty years, there have been several initiatives to develop English in school and university education in Bangladesh. However, several studies confirm a serious shortage of trained English language teachers and lack of appropriate materials. The form of teacher development programs that have been designed so far are aimed mainly at secondary and higher secondary education and did not establish any effective professional development approaches for long-term development of higher education level teachers. This warrants a study of the higher education sector since the importance of English is growing rapidly because of the private sector with its English orientation, the pressure of market forces, and the growth of private English medium universities.

Moreover, it should be noted that student feedback is critical to evaluate teacher professional development. Classrooms are not only places where students learn—they are also

places where teachers can learn (Richards, & Farrell, 2005). A deeper understanding of students and student learning is an important dimension of understanding what is meant by teacher development. Furthermore, teachers are typically interested in expanding their professional awareness and staying current with theory and experience in the area, as well as strengthening their teaching skills to feel more positive in what they teach and produce better outcomes with their students (Richards, & Farrell, 2005; Donohue et al., 2012). Therefore, a focus-group interview with students will be considered important in analyzing and evaluating teacher professional development in the Bangladeshi context.

The research explores the critical Perspective of ESL teacher professional development at higher education in Bangladesh. I believe that this study's findings will help ESL teachers contribute to English Language Teaching (ELT) with their assumptions and principles that underlie the theoretical framework for shaping their PD. It will also help inform future policymaking to improve the quality of English language teaching and learning at Bangladeshi universities.

Interview: To complete this study, I am asking you to participate in a focus-group interview that will last between 1 to 2 hours. There are no known conflicts of interest in the conducting of this research study. The interview will be conducted in English and done by telephone or zoom—whatever is convenient for you. Since both audio and video recording options are available for zoom, I will ask you to choose whether you want either an audiovisual interview or an audio interview and leave it to your absolute discretion. A focus group will be conducted on Zoom. Students of each university will be invited to share their thought about English language teaching needs and pedagogy in higher education in Bangladesh. You will be asked not to share that you participated in the focus group and not to share the identity of other

participating students. You will further be asked not to share what was said during the focus group.

You will be asked to discuss the following topics: (1) student English language needs; (2) English language teaching materials and methods used by the ESL teachers; (3) English medium instruction of teaching and learning; 4) challenges of learning English in Bangladesh; 4) the role of context and culture in English language education; and 5) higher education policy in Bangladesh. Demographic information (gender and academic year) will also be collected to create a summary profile of participants.

The interview will be conducted at a convenient time of your choice. A copy of the interview questions will be emailed to the participants prior to the interview so that they can ask for clarification or refuse to take part or answer any or all questions and can make an informed decision in this regard. Five universities have been selected for this study, and 4 students from each university will be interviewed in a group. The researcher from Winnipeg, Canada, will conduct the interview. Please sign and return this letter to Md Shayeeekh-Us Saleheen by email at salehems@myumanitoba.ca if you would like to participate in this research. If you are unable to sign this form and return it by email, please email Md Shayeeekh-Us Saleheen and type that you agree to be a part of this research. I will clarify the study's nature and intent and how the data will be recorded and used either using the Zoom app or by phone when I email you to request your participation.

Anonymity or confidentiality: You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without citing a reason. You will be free to elaborate on and add any additional information that you think relevant. You may refuse to answer specific questions that I ask or may request to stop the interview and turn off the recording device at any time. I would not include your name

or anyone's name when I type out what you said. You can withdraw from the study at any time, simply by contacting me via email at salehems@myumanitoba.ca. Should you choose to withdraw, your data will be destroyed. Participants can withdraw from the study at the time of the interview and before completing data analysis. After the data has been analyzed, it will not be possible to remove the participants' data. **The approximate date after which data will not be removed is January 31, 2022.** Your name and other information or email will not be shared with anyone else. The names of participants in this study will not be included in the dissemination of this research. With your permission, interviews will be audio or video recorded depending on the tool (Zoom or telephone) I use. I will then transcribe and use direct quotations. To protect your privacy, I will use codes instead of names. Hence, the transcripts will be labeled with a pseudonym like (A, B, C). If you have any questions about the study, please email Md Shayeekh-Us Saleheen at salehems@myumanitoba.ca.

Data storage and access: Your data will be handled and stored confidentially. This means that your data cannot be traced back to you. The management of data (i.e., collection, storage, and retrieval) will begin during the interview and continue for the duration of data analysis and the writing up of this study's findings. To organize the study's data, I will create a separate file for each participant. Data in all its forms will be stored in a safe, confidential location and not accessible to anyone other than myself as principal and sole investigator. All data that can identify participants, such as contact information, transcripts, interview guide, audio or video recordings, will be stored on an encrypted password-protected laptop and external hard drive and kept safe in a locked cabinet. The only individuals I can share the data access with will be my thesis supervisor, Dr. Francine Morin. The part of the data my supervisor can access will be selected by me. If required, it can also be shared with the other two members of my Ph.D.

advisory committee. Those who will have data access will respect the code of confidentiality and abide by the ethics board's regulations in maintaining the confidentiality and security of the data. After publication, only the necessary data to verify the study results will be kept and stored safely for a minimum of 10 years and deleted once it is no longer needed.

Feedback/Debriefing: Transcripts of each individual interview will be emailed to the participants to allow them to have the opportunity to evaluate the fairness and validity of their transcription. Participants will be asked to review their transcripts and allow adding, removing, or modifying content, as well as omitting potentially identifiable remarks. It may take approximately thirty minutes to review the transcript. The participants will have one week to specify any additions, deletions, or changes to the transcript and make any final comments. If they choose not to respond, then it will indicate that they have no requests for changes and are satisfied with the transcript and consent to its use in the research. Participants will be given the opportunity to obtain an electronic copy of the final report, should they specifically contact me to request it.

Risks: There are always risks to taking part in the research. In this study, these risks are minimal, defined in the TCPS2 as the level of risk that might be encountered in everyday life. Participants in this study are minimally at risk as participation is voluntary, and results will only be reported in the final report and during dissemination in a generalized format. The interview questions for teachers (Appendix A) are related to teacher professional development and pedagogy, which are related to their profession. The interview questions for students (Appendix B) are designed to know their needs and how those are addressed in ESL classes. Moreover, before the interview is conducted, you will be informed about their right to withdraw from the study at any time without citing a reason.

Potential Benefits: This study's findings will encourage Bangladeshi ESL teachers to contribute to English Language Teaching (ELT) with their assumptions and principles that underlie the theoretical framework for shaping their PD. Participants may benefit from the opportunity of sharing their perceptions about teacher professional development and can reflect on their experiences about ESL teaching practice, opportunities, and challenges of professional development at Bangladeshi universities. This might help them to plan their professional growth for the future. Again, this research can relate to international teacher education, enhancing and extending understanding of global approaches to teacher professional development. The professional expertise that the teachers will develop from the proposed program will guide them to create a platform for initiating a collaborative teacher development program in the Bangladeshi context. Student participants will know about their needs and how their needs are addressed in ESL classes.

Dissemination: If participants have indicated on the consent form that they would like to receive a copy of the final results, a summary will be sent to them after completing the study. The findings of the study will be used for this research project and to inform my doctoral thesis. The findings will also be disseminated via presentations, conference papers, and publications. A short report will be prepared to share with the University Grants Commission of Bangladesh (UGC), the Ministry of Education in Bangladesh, university administrators, policymakers, and educators. When study results are shared, all findings will be presented in a way that does not identify any participants. **Any publications will refer to the participants by their pseudonym or general descriptor. The reference quotations will be labeled with a pseudonym like (teacher, student). For example, “a teacher said...”, “a student said”.**

Compensation: No compensation will be offered to participants.

Consent: Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and /or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

The University of Manitoba may look at your research records to see that the research is being done in a safe and proper way.

This research has been approved by the Research Ethics Board at the University of Manitoba, Fort Garry campus. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Officer at 204-474-7122 or HumanEthics@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and thus you may choose to withdraw from the study by contacting the researcher before the completion of the data analysis on January 31, 2022.

Your signature below indicates that you have received a copy of this consent form for your records.

I agree to participate in this research.

☐ **I would like to receive a summary of the final research report via email.**

I agree to:

Being audio recorded ☐Yes ☐No

Being video and audio recorded ☐Yes ☐No

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher and/or Delegate's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Sincerely,

Md ShayeeKh-Us Saleheen
Ph.D. candidate
Curriculum, Teaching and Learning
Faculty of Education
University of Manitoba
E: salehems@myumanitoba.ca