

# **Teacher challenges and parental roles in early childhood EFL instruction: A synthesis review of nursery education in Bangladesh**

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**Abstract:** This article examines the primary challenges that early childhood teachers in Bangladesh face when teaching English to nursery-level pupils, with a focus on how parents can support them in this endeavor. The synthesis review utilizes secondary sources, including peer-reviewed studies, policy papers and educational reports, to identify major obstacles such as inadequate teacher training, insufficient educational resources and limited systemic support, particularly in rural areas. The study also reveals that parents who are actively involved in their children's education can significantly enhance their language skills. However, this kind of interaction is sometimes uneven or absent altogether, which makes learning a new language substantially more challenging. The results suggest that teachers, policymakers and families must work together to create a more supportive learning environment. The review emphasizes the importance of focusing policies on early language instruction and engaging parents. These policies could help close the gaps in early English education that currently exist in Bangladesh.

**Keywords:** development of the brain, language acquisition, social norms, parental support, education system

## **Introduction**

Nursery education is fundamental in shaping children's cognitive, emotional, and linguistic development. During this initial stage, children establish relationships with teachers and peers, while also beginning to develop patterns of learning behavior (Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly, and Driscoll 2005). In Bangladesh, nursery education prepares children for formal schooling and introduces structured language

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learning, frequently through English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Teachers at this level often face challenges in sustaining student engagement, creating lessons tailored to developmental stages, and addressing diverse learning needs (Zamin, Lotfie, and Salleh 2022). Effective early education establishes routines for feeding, sleeping, and play, which contribute to children's sense of security and emotional stability (Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly, and Driscoll 2005). Children exhibit heightened receptivity to language acquisition in their early years; therefore, introducing English at this stage can enhance long-term proficiency, particularly if initiated before puberty (Siregar, Tobing, and Fitri 2021). Bangladesh has prioritized early English instruction to improve educational and economic opportunities, acknowledging English as a global lingua franca. However, this ambition encounters various structural and pedagogical challenges. Numerous educators report challenges in engaging nursery students, which are attributed to insufficient classroom resources, overcrowded environments, and inadequate professional training (Sayakhan & Bradley 2019; Elango et al. 2015).

Technology, while progressively incorporated into education worldwide, is still not fully utilized in numerous nurseries in Bangladesh. Educators frequently have limited access to digital resources, necessitating the use of antiquated instructional methods (Elango et al. 2015). The administrative workload - including lesson planning, documentation maintenance, and progress evaluation - further burdens the responsibilities of nursery educators.

Parental involvement, a crucial aspect of early language education, remains inconsistent Islam, F. (2016). In the absence of robust parental support, children may struggle to retain and apply their academic knowledge. This gap is particularly pronounced in households with limited English proficiency or where parents lack understanding of how to support language acquisition effectively. (Mathieson and Banerjee 2010)

This study aims to examine the primary challenges encountered by nursery teachers in Bangladesh regarding the delivery of English as a Foreign Language instruction and to evaluate the degree and effects of parental involvement. The review synthesizes existing research to provide insights that can inform more effective educational practices and policy decisions aimed at enhancing early English education nationwide. (Ansarey 2012)

### **Literature review**

In the context of Bangladesh's education system, early childhood English instruction has gained increasing attention due to its potential to lay the foundation for long-term language proficiency and cognitive development. However, a critical examination of existing literature reveals a set of complex challenges that continue to affect the quality and accessibility of nursery-level English education. These issues span across teacher preparedness, curriculum design, instructional materials, parental involvement, and regional disparities—all of which directly influence children's early encounters with the English language. (Rahman, M. M. et al. 2019).

### **Shortage of trained teachers and resource constraints**

An ongoing issue in much research is the shortage of professionally educated English teachers at the nursery level. Milon (2016) stated that many teachers lack the teaching skills and language skills necessary to teach English effectively to young students. This gap is particularly pronounced in rural areas, where schools often employ generalist instructors who lack specialized training in teaching language to young children. Das et al. (2021) make a similar point, noting that the uneven distribution of experienced teachers leads to significant disparities in the quality of education between cities and rural areas. Elango et al. (2015) also note that many nursery schools struggle to obtain basic supplies, such as age-appropriate books, audio-visual materials, and language learning tools that are centered on play. Even teachers who want to do a good job struggle to give interesting and useful classes without these aids.

### **Cognitive and developmental benefits of early language learning**

Many academics have emphasized the importance of teaching a second language to young children, particularly for their brain development and academic readiness. Islam, M. S. (2019) states that young children who begin learning a second language in nursery school are more adept at being flexible and problem-solving than children who only speak one language. Farooqui (2014) supports this claim by stating that learning a second language, even before attending school, can help establish brain connections associated with memory and higher-order thinking. These benefits not only help kids excel in school, but they also prepare them for more challenging learning tasks later on. Gardner (2021) noted that this type of cognitive enrichment often enables

individuals to become more adept at adapting to multicultural and multilingual settings. This is another reason to teach English at an early age.

### **The cultural and social capital of English in Bangladesh**

In Bangladeshi society, English is essential for both social and economic reasons. It is commonly used as a sign of education and social mobility. In this case, knowing how to speak English is not just an academic goal; it is also crucial for gaining college admission, securing a job, and engaging with the world. Salahuddin, Khan, and Rahman (2013) stated that being proficient in English is often associated with being part of the elite and advancing in society, especially in urban areas. Dillon (2019) states that children who learn English at an early age are more likely to succeed in school settings where English is the primary language of instruction. Many parents view paying for their child's English language instruction at nursery school as an essential step in ensuring their child's future is bright. Paul (2022) notes that this idea has led to a significant increase in the number of families, including those with low incomes, who want their children to attend English-language preschools.

### **Instructional approaches and limitations**

Modern early childhood programs emphasize interactive, play-based learning methodologies that align with the developmental stages of young children. (Sayakhan and Bradley 2019) highlighted the significance of integrating songs, rhymes, storytelling, and games to enhance the enjoyment and retention of English learning. These approaches align with theories of learning that emphasize the importance of exploration and active engagement in the process of acquiring knowledge. Nonetheless, despite the increasing recognition of effective methodologies, numerous educational institutions in Bangladesh continue to rely on rote memorization and a teacher-centric approach to instruction (Sultana 2010). The lack of teaching strategies that cater to the needs of children in specific classrooms restricts student motivation and hinders effective language acquisition. Aboud and Hossain (2011) noted that schools in rural areas with limited resources often lack the necessary tools and training to adopt more dynamic instructional models, which exacerbates the achievement gap between urban and rural students.

### **Regional disparities in language education**

Geographical and infrastructural differences persist as a challenge in delivering high-quality English language education throughout Bangladesh. Students in cities typically attend schools that are better equipped, have well-trained teachers, and offer opportunities to practice English both inside and outside the classroom. On the other hand, children who live in rural or distant locations typically attend overcrowded classrooms and do not have the opportunity to hear or speak English outside of their textbooks. Aboud (2006) and Rahman, M. M. and Pandian (2018) have demonstrated that the gap between rural and urban areas results in significantly different learning outcomes. For example, children in cities regularly perform better on English proficiency exams than those in rural areas. These differences between regions are not only about logistics; they also reveal deeper structural issues with the distribution of educational resources (Bhuiyan 2011)

### **Role of parental involvement in early language acquisition**

The role of parents and caregivers is also vital for early English education to be successful. Numerous studies have shown that children learn significantly more when their language acquisition is encouraged at home. Adriany and Saefullah (2015) suggest that parents who regularly read to their children, discuss simple English words during daily activities, or watch educational shows together can help their children remember what they learn in school. Brumen (2011) also says that kids are more likely to enjoy and appreciate studying English if they do it alongside their parents. However, in Bangladesh, many parents lack the confidence or fluency to support their children effectively. (Sumarni, Vianty, and Andika 2021) stated that many parents recognize the importance of English, but they often do not feel prepared to help their child learn it. This separation is particularly apparent in homes with low incomes or in rural areas, where educational support may be limited.

### **Technology as a supporting tool**

Another area of interest is the use of technology in early childhood classes, although it is not always employed in the same way. Schools with good resources combine digital media, smartphone apps, and smartboards to create English courses that are engaging for kids. However, most Bangladeshi nurseries, especially those in rural areas,

lack these types of tools or don't utilize them sufficiently. Elango et al. (2015) suggest that teachers are unable to use digital information in their lessons because they lack the necessary tools or training, despite evidence that it is effective. Rahim (2021) suggests that targeted investments in educational technology and teacher training could make a significant difference in how English is taught in nurseries.

### **Literature gap**

There is a considerable amount of research on early childhood education in Bangladesh. Still, relatively little has been done on the specific challenges that arise when teaching English to children at the nursery level. Numerous studies have investigated broad issues related to teaching English in elementary and secondary schools. Still, there is limited research on the early stages of language learning, such as in nursery school, when children first start learning English.

One major problem with the research is that there aren't enough well-trained nursery teachers. Many sites discuss this problem, but few delve into the details of how it affects language teaching in both urban and rural areas. There has been insufficient research on the small details of how prepared teachers are, such as their knowledge of age-appropriate teaching methods, second language instruction, and working with multilingual classrooms. In many cases, teachers who aren't trained or lack the necessary qualifications are expected to teach English to children who are just beginning to learn how to think and speak. This results in uneven quality of teaching. (Rashid and Akkari 2020)

Another significant gap lies in the accessibility and quality of teaching resources. Many kindergarten and pre-primary schools in Bangladesh, especially those outside major cities, lack the basic teaching resources they need, such as engaging picture books, interactive media, or phonics-based learning tools. Some studies mention this lack of materials, but there isn't much research on how these problems affect student performance or teacher morale. Additionally, people often discuss how technology can help close these gaps, but there has been limited research on this topic in the nursery setting. There are additional linguistic and cultural elements that exacerbate the learning gap, but not enough research has been conducted on them. There are significant differences between English and Bangla in terms of phonology, syntax, and meaning. These variances make things more complicated for young learners who are

learning an organized language for the first time. Still, relatively little research examines how these structural differences impact people's ability to understand and use language effectively early on. (Sarmin 2022)

Finally, the literature doesn't say much about how parents don't want their kids to learn English at this early level. Many Bangladeshi families, especially those in rural or impoverished areas, may not immediately see the value of teaching English to their preschool-aged children. This lack of knowledge or interest may make it harder for children to acquire the language outside of school, which further widens the learning gap. There is considerable research that demonstrates how parents can help their children learn language at an early age; however, there is a lack of information on what happens when parents aren't involved. All of these gaps indicate that a comprehensive study is needed to examine the issues of training, resource availability, cultural and language barriers, and family roles in early English instruction. This review aims to address this by bringing together current knowledge and highlighting important areas where Bangladesh's nursery education system requires policy and teaching changes.

### **Research objectives and questions**

The study aims to identify the key challenges faced by teachers in teaching English to nursery students in Bangladesh and to examine the role and importance of parental guidance in supporting English language education for these students.

The following specific questions are crucial to the study as they will help achieve the research aim:

1. What do the teachers face in teaching English to nursery students in Bangladesh?
2. What is the importance of parental guidance in educating nursery students in English in Bangladesh?

### **Research methods**

#### *Research design*

This study employs a qualitative research design and a secondary data analysis approach to investigate the challenges that nursery-level English teachers in Bangladesh face and how parents can contribute to early language instruction. Instead of collecting new, original data through fieldwork, the study examined existing academic literature,

government publications, journal articles, and educational reports relevant to teaching English to young children.

Researchers can build on existing findings and identify common themes across multiple studies by conducting secondary data analysis. This strategy is both acceptable and practical because this review focuses more on combining patterns from various sources than on measuring variables. It provides a broader understanding of the institutional, educational, and social factors that influence how young children learn the English language.

#### *Data collection*

Relevant materials were selected through purposive sampling, with an emphasis on literature that specifically focused on early childhood English instruction, teacher training, educational disparities, and family engagement in the Bangladeshi context. The search encompassed peer-reviewed publications from both international and local journals, reports from educational NGOs and government agencies, as well as PhD dissertations and policy assessments from reputable academic institutions. Only literature published in English from 2000 to 2024 was included to guarantee the study captures both enduring tendencies and contemporary advancements.

#### *Data analysis*

A thematic synthesis approach was employed to analyze the chosen texts. Each paper was analyzed for recurrent themes, including educator qualifications, availability of learning resources, instructional tactics, and the impact of family involvement. Themes were subsequently categorized and analyzed in relation to the study's research topics. The objective was to discern both prevalent patterns and variations between urban and rural environments, as well as between public and private institutions. All interpretations were based on the context of early education in Bangladesh, with meticulous consideration of cultural and structural elements.

#### *Ethical considerations*

This study relies exclusively on secondary data obtained from publicly accessible academic and policy sources, with no direct engagement with human participants. Consequently, official ethical approval was not necessary. Nonetheless, meticulous attention was devoted to faithfully representing the original authors' findings, carefully citing all sources, and preventing misinterpretation or selective reporting. The review adhered rigorously to ethical criteria about academic honesty, transparency, and responsible scholarship.

## **Findings and discussion**

The study reveals significant differences in how English is taught to young children in urban and rural areas of Bangladesh. One of the most critical issues is the substantial discrepancy in teacher qualifications and access to professional development. Hossain's (2016) research indicates that 85% of teachers in cities are qualified, and 80% have received professional training. In rural areas, on the other hand, just 50% of teachers are certified, and 45% have had training. This disparity highlights a problem with the way rural schools operate: there aren't enough competent and professionally prepared instructors, which makes it challenging to teach English effectively. The lack of training opportunities exacerbates this problem. It makes teachers less effective at teaching and means that young learners don't have enough exposure to language.

There are problems with teachers, but there is also a glaring unfairness in how educational resources are shared. According to Rahman and Pandian (2019), metropolitan schools have significantly more textbooks (90%), audio-visual aids (70%), and learning materials (80%) than rural schools, which have only 60%, 30%, and 40% of these resources available, respectively. The lack of resources, especially interactive aids, makes it more challenging for teachers to employ a variety of engaging teaching methods in remote areas. This lack of resources exacerbates the learning environment and widens the gap between urban and rural nursery students.

Over time, there is also a continuous difference in how well students do and how motivated they are. According to Chowdhury and Kabir (2014), urban children typically perform higher on proficiency examinations, with an average score of 75 to 80, whereas rural students score between 50 and 55. In the same way, urban pupils stay highly motivated (85% to 90%), while rural students show less motivation, ranging from 60% to 65%. The fact that rural children continue to lag in both their academic performance and their interest in learning English suggests that the lack of resources and inadequate teacher training are significant barriers to their educational growth and motivation to engage with the language. Parental involvement is another key factor that influences children's English learning outcomes. In urban areas, parents are often more involved in their children's education, supporting homework and encouraging language development at home.

In contrast, rural parents may lack the awareness or resources to provide similar support, which can further widen the educational gap. These results demonstrate the lasting impact of unequal educational opportunities. They also highlight the importance of making targeted adjustments to enhance teacher training and resource allocation in rural areas.

In short, the research reveals systemic unfairnesses that harm rural nursery schools in Bangladesh. These include less qualified teachers, fewer resources, and worse student results. To ensure that all students have access to fair early English language education, officials and teachers need to focus on improving teacher training, distributing resources more evenly, and engaging students more in rural regions. (Hamid, Sussex, and Khan 2009)

## **Discussion**

The study's results reveal significant issues with the current setup of early English language education for nursery children in Bangladesh, particularly in rural areas. An important issue is the substantial disparities in teacher qualifications and access to professional development. There aren't enough educated teachers in rural schools, which makes it hard to use practical, age-appropriate approaches for teaching English. This lack of teachers not only makes the lessons less effective, but it also means that young learners have less exposure to the language during a critical period when they are learning it, a finding that other research has firmly supported (Das, Akter, and Chowdhury 2021). Hossain (2016) discussed the rural-urban gap in teacher training and qualifications. He points out that the dearth of properly trained instructors in rural regions makes early English instruction much less effective overall.

The situation is exacerbated by the fact that educational resources are not distributed evenly. Rural students have significantly less access to essential materials, such as textbooks, audio-visual aids, and supplementary learning tools, which are necessary to make classrooms engaging and interactive. In rural areas, these resources are not available, which limits opportunities for meaningful language practice and sensory learning (Rahman, M. M. and Pandian 2018). These are both widely recognized as necessary for acquiring language in early life (Aboud and Hossain 2011). The link between the availability of resources and student participation in learning highlights even further

how rural students fare worse than their urban counterparts, who often have access to better-prepared classrooms.

The survey also reveals a disparity in academic performance and motivation between students in cities and rural areas. Urban students typically show better English skills and more motivation to learn English. This pattern is consistent with previous research, which shows a strong link between motivation, language exposure, and helpful learning environments (Brumen 2011; Gardner 2021). Rural pupils may be less motivated because their classrooms aren't as engaging and their parents are less involved. As the research demonstrates, involving families is crucial for helping children learn to speak and write early in their development. Parents who read, talk, or watch English-language media with their children are more likely to help them understand the language more effectively and become more interested in it (Rahman, M. 1996; Adriany & Saefullah 2015). In rural areas, parents generally can't get involved as much since they are less educated and there are fewer opportunities for their children to learn.

These results indicate that teacher training, resource allocation and family involvement collectively contribute to the effectiveness of early English language instruction. To close the gap between cities and rural areas and provide all nursery students in Bangladesh with the same opportunities to learn, it is essential to consider these elements as a whole. Policy initiatives should focus on increasing the distribution of educational materials, encouraging parents to get involved through community-based activities, and making teacher training programs better for rural teachers. Only by working together in these areas can we make lasting advances in early childhood EFL education. This will enable more people to learn languages in a broader range of settings.

### **Implications and recommendations**

The findings reveal that there are pressing and complex issues with teaching English to young children in Bangladesh. If these problems aren't fixed, the difference in language skills between city and country kids could not only remain the same, but also increase over time (Khulel 2021). This would have a significant impact on fairness in education and the future chances of many young learners. Policymakers, teachers, and parents must collaborate closely to enhance the country's early English learning environment (Rahman et al., 2019).

Strengthening teacher training programs - especially those that focus on teaching English to young children - is a crucial stage in the development of education. Teachers will be able to deliver practical and age-appropriate lessons for their students if they invest in professional development (Islam, M.S. et al. 2021). Schools must also ensure that teachers and students have access to the necessary tools to make classes enjoyable and dynamic, such as textbooks, audiovisual aids, and other learning materials. Even well-trained teachers may struggle to keep young students engaged without these tools (Hasnat 2017).

It's just as important to involve parents in their children's English learning journey. When parents engage in simple activities with their children, such as reading together, speaking English, or watching English shows at home, their children's interest and skills in the language increase significantly (Rouf and Rashid 2021). Community outreach and support can empower families, especially in rural areas where parents are less likely to be literate and involved.

To sum up, solving the problems with nursery English education requires everyone to work together to ensure that teachers are adequately prepared, resources are readily available, and families are supportive. Bangladesh can ensure that all young learners, regardless of their background, have a fair chance to learn English well and succeed in the future by working together in this manner.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, this study underscores the importance of investigating the substantial differences in early English language education for nursery pupils in Bangladesh, particularly between urban and rural areas. The results show that the lack of qualified and professionally educated teachers in rural areas significantly compromises the quality of instruction. This means that young learners don't receive as much exposure to effective English language teaching at a crucial stage in their development. Additionally, rural students face challenges in accessing essential educational materials, including textbooks, audiovisual aids, and other learning tools. This makes it harder for them to learn, as it limits the variety and interactivity of classroom activities that are essential for language learning. Additionally, the level of involvement of parents is crucial for determining how motivated and skilled their children are. Urban families tend to be

more involved and supportive, which improves their children's learning experiences and outcomes.

These problems are all interconnected, making it challenging for both urban and rural students to learn the same language and remain motivated. This might perpetuate educational inequalities and limit opportunities for a significant portion of the population. To address these issues, we require a comprehensive and well-coordinated plan. It is essential to invest in specialized teacher training programs that equip teachers with the skills necessary to teach English effectively to young children. Ensuring that all students have equal access to learning materials and classroom resources will make it easier for them to learn actively and enjoyably. Additionally, increasing parental involvement through community outreach and educational programs may help bridge the gaps in motivation and support that hinder the learning of rural students.

Ultimately, overcoming these challenges is crucial not only for enhancing English language skills but also for promoting more equitable education and social inclusion throughout Bangladesh. Policymakers and teachers can enhance early English education by simultaneously improving teachers' skills, increasing resource availability, and engaging families more effectively. This will equip all young learners with the language skills they need to succeed in school and continue learning throughout their lives. It will also help to decrease differences and make society fairer.

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