



ISSN Print: 2394-7500
ISSN Online: 2394-5869
Impact Factor (RJIF): 8.4
IJAR 2025; 11(4): 97-102
www.allresearchjournal.com
Received: 09-01-2025
Accepted: 14-02-2025

Dr. Md. Billal Hossain
Senior Teacher, Department of
Mathematics, Ideal School &
College, Dhaka, Bangladesh

Sakib Hossain
Student, Bachelor of Social
Science (BSS), Development
Studies, University of Dhaka,
Dhaka, Bangladesh

Khadija Akter
Student, Bachelor of Social
Science (BSS), Political
Science, University of Dhaka,
Dhaka, Bangladesh

Corresponding Author:
Dr. Md. Billal Hossain
Senior Teacher, Department of
Mathematics, Ideal School &
College, Dhaka, Bangladesh

English version education in Bangladesh: Problems and prospects

Md. Billal Hossain, Sakib Hossain and Khadija Akter

DOI: <https://www.doi.org/10.22271/allresearch.2025.v11.i4b.12457>

Abstract

English is an international language. The job market has a demand for English. Learning English helps students to build a global network and to participate in the global market. As a medium of instruction English is required in higher education. The purpose of this study was to explore the problems and prospects of teaching and learning in the English version schools -of Bangladesh. This study was descriptive in nature, qualitative in method and interview schedules were used as tools. Thematic way was used to analyze the collected data. Data were collected from 24 respondents of different categories. Of them 6 were teachers and 12 were students and 6 were guardians. 3 English version schools were selected conveniently from 3 Thana's. Out of 12 students 6 were boys and 6 were girls of class 10. According to the opinion of teachers, students and guardians, English version schools have faced some significant challenges, including the lack of qualified teachers, experienced teachers, high costs, and the weakness of textbooks which are translated from the Bangla version. The salary of teachers should be increased. Teachers should be trained in English. All fees of the English version should be the same as the Bangla version.

Keywords: English version, problems, prospects

1. Introduction

Education system of Bangladesh is divided into three levels such as primary level, secondary level and tertiary level. Again Bangladesh has three main educational systems such as 'General Education', 'Madrasah Education' and 'Vocational Education'. At all levels of schooling, students can choose to receive their education in English or Bangla. In general education system, the medium of teaching is both Bangla and English. The English medium is run in two curriculums in our country; English Medium National Curriculum which follows the books of National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB), known as English version and English Medium International Curriculum which follows the books published by mostly foreign authors and controlled by different examination boards monitored by UK and USA, that locally is governed by British Council, Bangladesh. There are four curriculums in the English Medium education system as Cambridge Assessment International Education (CAIE), Pearson Edexcel, Oxford International AQA (Assessment and Qualifications Alliance) and International Baccalaureate (IB). Among these four, the first two are more famous and recognized in Bangladesh.

English-medium schools are mainly private schools where all the courses are taught in English except one Bengali Language. These schools in Bangladesh follow the General Certificate of Education (GCE) syllabus where students are prepared for taking their Ordinary Level (O level) and Advanced Level (A level) examinations. The General Certificate of Education system is one of the most internationally recognized qualifications, based in the United Kingdom. The Ordinary and Advanced Level examinations are English which are equivalent to the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) and Higher Secondary School Certificate (HSC) examinations respectively. The GCE examination conducted by the British Council takes place twice a year. Bangladesh has recently opened English version schools that follows the Bangla medium school curriculum and based upon textbooks translated from the Bengali language into English. In recent years national language policy has given top priority to English language education in Bangladesh.

There are approximately 52 English version schools in Dhaka, several towns and five outside the country which are run by Bangladeshi missions (Billah, 2011) ^[1]. In 2011 the first Internet based English version school was opened in Gazipur. The government of Bangladesh opened the first English version schools in cadet colleges in the late 1990s. English version schools are usually less costly than English medium schools. The first English version school in rural areas was established in Tangail in 2010. Akhter (2023) ^[2] reported “According to the Directorate of Primary Education, presently 350 primary schools have the English version in the country, with 141 in Dhaka city. Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics said that in 2020 there were 162 schools and colleges across the country with English version education for students of Class VI to Class XII”.

English-medium education was first introduced during the British rule in the Indian subcontinent. After the creation of Bangladesh in 1971, many of these schools became Bengali-medium schools. Then English-medium schools (EMSs) with international qualifications were also established by the Bangladeshi nationals. The year 1990’s is the major period of the growth of English-medium education all over the world. In the year 2010 and this is the first time when BANBEIS (Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics) conducted a survey on English-medium schools and it reveals that there are 442 English-medium schools, but due to lack of access to these schools by the officials, only 159 schools were included in the survey. Rashid (2017) ^[3] included that English-version education has a bright future as the job market has a demand for English and guardians prefer to teach their kids in English as the cost is lower here compared to English-medium schools. Mousmi and Kusakabe (2017) ^[4] mentioned that as a medium of instruction English is required in higher education. The majority of the student participants want to have a career at Multinational Corporations. English is an international language, so children need to learn it to keep pace with the world. Learning English helps to build a global network and participate in the global market. English is necessary for better life chances and in order to have a prosperous life. Learning English is crucial for the development of Bangladesh.

Hamid and Erling (2016) ^[5] mentioned about the different facilities of English such as English is the most powerful language among others in the world, it is the only medium of communication internationally. Moreover, the language of computer is English, the language of court and judiciaries in all international fields is English, the ranks and positions of defense forces in home and abroad are in English, the names of all devices and tools are in English in the field of Information and communication technologies, most of the countries in the world use English officially as their 2nd language, Worldwide employment opportunities is defended on English. Collaboration is an option for mutual growth, support and research which is also defend on English.

According to the opinion of Prodhon (2016) ^[6] the English Version (EV) schools generally follow the same structure as their Bangla Version counterparts. Qualification of Teachers, Infrastructure, and Teacher Student Ratio should be revised here. The average ratio is 40 students to 1 teacher. In Finland and the US the ratio is only 1:14. Remuneration and status of teachers need elevation.

According to Billah (2011) ^[1] has cleared that guardians have been sending their kids to English version schools to develop strong footing of English of their children but as the teachers are not qualified enough, they conduct classes in Bengali, they are not experienced as well to make quality question papers, it does not have specially developed books and curriculum just the translated books of Bengali medium have been used which are full of mistakes and translation is also not up to the mark in some cases.

Rashid (2017) ^[3] mentioned that English-version education at the primary and secondary levels is passing through a haphazard phase due to lack of quality textbooks and qualified teachers. Students and guardians allege that English-version teachers conduct their classes in Bangla. The translated books are full of grammatical errors and spelling mistakes. Somewhere the meanings of some contents are changed while being translated into English. Akhter (2023) ^[2] mentioned that many parents claimed that despite paying high school fees, their children struggled in English-version schools due to lack of quality teachers & textbooks.

“The quality of teachers is not satisfactory.” said Hossain (2017) ^[7], The principal of Willes Little Flower School and College. “There is a serious shortage of qualified teachers here”. Chowdhury (2017) ^[8], a renowned academic, said: “When there is an acute crisis of qualified English teachers in schools to teach, it's rather unnecessary to teach in the English version.”

1.1 Statement of the Study

English Version (EV) education in Bangladesh follows the National Curriculum but is taught in English instead of Bengali. This system was introduced to improve students' English proficiency and global competitiveness while maintaining alignment with the national education framework. However, challenges such as lack of trained teachers, inadequate teaching materials, affordability concerns, and differences in student performance raise questions about its effectiveness (Rahman, 2019) ^[9]. This study aims to critically examine the current state of EV education, identifying its major challenges and potential benefits. It will also explore policy implications and possible improvements to enhance the quality and accessibility of EV education across different socio-economic groups.

1.2 Rationale of the Study

The growing demand for English proficiency in higher education and employment in Bangladesh has led to the expansion of EV education. English is often seen as a gateway to better career opportunities and academic advancement, especially in a globalized world (Hamid & Erling, 2016) ^[5]. Despite these advantages, concerns remain regarding the quality of education, equity in access, and long-term learning outcomes. This study is important as it will provide an in-depth analysis of whether EV education effectively prepares students for global competitiveness or contributes to educational inequality. By investigating these issues, the study will offer insights into how EV education can be improved for broader accessibility and impact.

1.3 Scope of the Study

This study focuses on the current status, challenges, and future prospects of EV education in Bangladesh.

Specifically, it covers the following areas where (i) Examining how effectively EV education follows the National Curriculum and enhances English proficiency. (ii) Assessing teacher qualifications, training programs, teaching methodologies, quality of textbooks, teachers salary and students cost etc. (iii) How EV students perform in national and international contexts.

1.4 Purpose

This study intends to explore the problems and prospects of teaching and learning in the English version schools of Bangladesh. The opinions of teachers, students and guardians were the focus of the study.

1.5 Research Questions

1. What are the opinions of teachers about the problems and prospects of English version schools of Bangladesh?
2. What are the opinions of students about the problems and prospects of English version schools of Bangladesh?
3. What are the opinions of guardians about the problems and prospects of English version schools of Bangladesh?

2. Review of Related Literature

English Version (EV) education in Bangladesh follows the National Curriculum but is taught in English instead of Bengali. This system was introduced to enhance students' English proficiency while maintaining the integrity of the national education framework. Several studies have examined the role, challenges, and potential of EV education, focusing on issues such as curriculum implementation, teacher quality, student performance, socio-economic factors, and policy implications.

The introduction of EV schools was driven by the increasing demand for English proficiency in higher education and employment (Hamid & Erling, 2016) ^[5]. As English has become a global lingua franca, many parents in Bangladesh perceive English-medium instruction as a means to secure better career opportunities for their children (Rahman, 2019) ^[9]. Unlike English Medium Schools (EMS), which follows foreign curricula, EV schools provide an alternative by maintaining the National Curriculum but by delivering instructions in English. This model aims to bridge the gap between local and international educational standards while remaining affordable compared to EMS (Sultana, 2018) ^[10].

Many teachers struggle with English fluency, affecting the overall quality of education in English version (Rahman & Pandian, 2018) ^[11]. Studies indicate that while EV students may develop better English skills than their Bengali Medium counterparts, they often face difficulties in mastering complex subjects due to language barriers in instruction (Chowdhury & Kabir, 2014) ^[12]. Additionally, the lack of proper teacher training programs specific to EV education exacerbates this issue. Research has shown mixed outcomes regarding student performance in EV schools. Some studies suggest that EV students have better access to global academic resources and perform well in English-language assessments (Hamid, 2011) ^[13]. However, others argue that students often struggle with comprehension in subjects like science and mathematics, where English proficiency becomes a barrier rather than an advantage (Sultana, 2018) ^[10]. Moreover, many EV students revert to

Bengali for complex concepts, leading to concerns about cognitive overload (Rahman, 2019) ^[9]. One of the main criticisms of EV education is its limited accessibility. While it is more affordable than EMS, EV education is still predominantly available in urban areas, creating an educational difference between urban and rural students (Chowdhury & Kabir, 2014) ^[12]. Many rural schools lack the resources to offer EV education, and students from low-income backgrounds find it challenging to afford supplementary materials and tutoring necessary for success in EV schools (Rahman & Pandian, 2018) ^[11]. This contributes to the growing educational inequality in Bangladesh.

Government policies regarding EV education remain unclear. While the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) oversee textbook preparation, there is no dedicated regulatory framework to monitor the quality of EV instruction (Hamid, 2011) ^[13]. Experts argue that policy reforms should focus on teacher training, curriculum adaptation, and equitable access to EV education to ensure long-term sustainability and effectiveness (Sultana, 2018) ^[10].

The literature indicates that while EV education in Bangladesh has the potential to enhance English proficiency and global competitiveness, its success is hindered by inadequate teacher training, uneven student performance, and socio-economic disparities. So it is needed a in-depth study to address these issues and challenges.

3. Methodology

This study was designed to explore the challenges and prospects of English version schools in Bangladesh. This study was qualitative in nature and used interview schedule as tools. Qualitative method was used to analyze the data collected for this study.

3.1 Population and sample

All English version schools of Bangladesh were the population of this study. As the largest one the target population of this study delimited to only Dhaka city. Data were collected from 24 respondents of different categories. Of them 6 are teachers and 12 are students and 6 were guardians. 3 schools were selected conveniently from 3 Thana's. The total number of student sample was 12. Of these 12 students there were 6 boys and 6 girls.

3.2 Tools for Data collection

In this study, for collection of data from the field, interview schedule for teachers, students and guardians were used as tools. The interview schedule was consisted of a - total number of 5 items in each. All questions were open-ended. The aim of this schedule was to know their opinions. In this research, the interview schedule was a structured questionnaire.

3.3 Triangulation of data

Same data were collected from different respondents such as teachers, students and guardians. In this way most of the data were tri-angulated where triangulation is one of the measurements of reliability and validity for data.

3.4 Procedure of Data collection

After reaching school, head teachers consent were taken and been explained about the purpose of this research. At first

teachers interviews were taken and then student's interviews were taken. Another day guardians interviews were taken. The respondents wrote down their opinion about all the open ended questions.

3.5 Analysis and Interpretation of data

All the collected questionnaires, interview schedules were coded before analysis. Then the work of entry was done. Processing and recording (some cases) were done and then it was ready for analysis. Totally 120 points of information were analyzed under the 6 themes or major areas. Most of the areas were some sub areas.

4. Results: Analysis

4.1 Teacher's opinion

Teachers think the salary system of English version schools should improve. According to their effort, their salary is poor. For this, those who are able to speak in English will not stay here and expert teachers will not join here. As a result no experienced teacher will be found in the English version schools. Thus, the improvement of English Education will be hindered. Lack of proper remuneration is the main cause of the crisis of efficient teachers in the English version. Moreover the status of a teacher in our country is not recognized properly. The teachers of English version should be included under monthly payment order (MPO).

Most of the teachers lack English fluency and enriched vocabulary. Teachers need proper training in English under the care of the institution. Generally most of the students belong from Bengali households so they lack English fluency and better vocabulary.

Being a foreign language, English seems very tough for some students. Students of the English version face while collecting helping books or coaching. These problems are very common among the students.

Teachers believe that English version students have a bright future. These students are an asset for the world. They can succeed anywhere, home or abroad. But for this bright future students must study attentively. The medium of teaching and learning of higher education at national or international level is English. It is a great opportunity for English version students.

4.2 Guardian's opinion

There is a crisis of efficient teachers at English version because English version schools are not very old, maximum of them are new. No experienced teachers are seen here. They are not recruited for the English version. Most Bangla version teachers are given responsibilities to take English version classes. They are not skilled in taking class in English. The individuals who are efficient in English are not willing to join English version schools because of poor remuneration. At present those who are teaching at English version schools are not students of English version school. They should be trained in English by the authorities.

Compared to English medium education, expenses of English version schools are not so high but expenses of Bangla version education are cheaper than English version.

Parents face several problems while finding experienced teachers. If they get any platform, they demand huge charges that maximum families can't afford. Though English version education is popular in our country now-a-days but helping books and coaching is not yet available for

students. Teachers, reference books are not sufficiently available which the main problem here is. Fees of private tutor are high here. Most of the publications cannot publish any helping books for English version students.

The Guardian can't provide a full English speaking environment at home for their child. So English practicing gets hampered. All books are directly translated from Bangla version, therefore some words and sentences are difficult. These are not easy to understand.

Guardians believe that English version students have a bright future. These students are the asset for the world. They can succeed anywhere, home or abroad. But for this bright future students must study attentively. The medium of teaching and learning of higher education at national or international level is English. It is a great opportunity for English version students.

4.3 Student's opinion

Students' mother tongue is Bangla. So, they often get problems in terms of understanding the English terms and concepts given in the text books. Sometimes it tends to misconception of the relevant topic. Students said that teachers face multiple problems while teaching in English for not being able to speak in English fluently.

Having no proper experience of teaching or helping an English version student as a parent, they face some problems. They face problems in collecting English version based study materials. As the number of people having English version based academic background is quite limited, thus the authority don't feel the necessity of publishing enough books owing to lower profit margin.

English version students have the capability of learning and dealing with various aspects in English. This will lead them to rule the international relations quite efficiently which ultimately leads to economic progress of the nation. Also English version students can deal with undergrad and post grad effectively.

5. Findings

5.1 Future of English version students

Teachers, students and guardians, all have agreed that English version students have a bright future. These students are an asset for the world. They can succeed anywhere home or abroad. But for this bright future students must study attentively. The medium of teaching and learning of higher education at national or international level is English. It is a great opportunity for English version students. English version students have the capability of learning and dealing various aspects in English. This will lead them to rule the international relations quite efficiently which ultimately leads to economic progress of the nation.

5.2 Crisis of efficient teacher for English version

Lack of proper remuneration is the main cause of the crisis of efficient teachers for the English version. Moreover the status of a teacher in our country is not recognized properly. The English version should be included under MPO. There is a crisis of efficient teachers in the English version because English version schools are not very old, the maximum of them are new. No experienced teachers are seen here. They are not recruited for the English version. Most Bangla version teachers are given responsibilities to take English version classes. They are not skilled enough in taking classes in English. The individuals who are efficient in

English are not willing to join English version schools because of poor remuneration. At present those who are teaching at English version schools are not students of English version school. They should be trained for English version teaching by the authorities.

5.3 Students find it difficult to collect helping books and tutoring services

As the number of students having English version based academic background is quite limited, thus the authority doesn't feel the necessity of publishing enough books owing to lower profit margin. Parents face several problems finding experienced teachers. If they get any platform, they demand huge charges that maximum families can't afford. Though English version education is popular in our country now-a-days but helping books and coaching is yet not available for those students. Teachers, reference books are not sufficiently available which the main problem here is. Fees of private tutor are high here. Most of the publications cannot publish any helping books for English version students. Students of English version face problems while collecting helping books or coaching. These problems are very common among the students.

5.4 Teachers face different problem at English version

Teachers think the salary system of English version schools should improve. According to their effort, their salary is poor. For this, those who are able to speak in English will not stay here and expert teachers will not join here. As a result no experienced teacher will be found at the English version school. Thus, the improvement of English Education will be hindered. Most of the teachers lack English fluency and better vocabulary. Teachers need proper training in English under the care of the institution. Generally most of the students belong from Bengali households so they lack English fluency and vocabulary. As a foreign language, English seems very tough for some students. Students said that teachers face multiple problems while teaching in English not being able to speak in English fluently.

5.5 Parents struggle to provide assistance for their children in the English version

As they have no proper experience of teaching or helping an English version student as a parent, they face some problems. They face problems collecting English version based study materials. Compared to English medium education, expenses of English version schools are not so high but expenses of Bangla version education are cheaper to English version.

Parents face several problems finding experienced teachers. If they get any platform, they demand huge charges that maximum families can't afford. Though English version education is popular in our country now-a-days but helping books and coaching is not yet available for students. Teacher, reference books are not sufficiently available which is the main problem here. Fees of private tutor are high here. Most of the publications cannot publish any helping books for English version students. The Guardian can't provide a full English speaking environment at home for their child. So English practicing gets hampered. All books are directly translated from Bangla version; therefore some words and sentences are difficult to understand.

6. Recommendation: The remuneration of teachers should be increased. Then expert teachers will stay here and students will get experienced teachers. The gov. should include the teachers under MPO for the security of their job. Teachers should be trained in English under the responsibility of institutions. English version background should be considered as a priority of teacher's recruitment. All fees of the English version should be the same as the Bangla version. NCTB should take necessary steps to improve the quality of textbooks. An introductory English course should be introduced for new students to develop their spoken and written English.

7. Conclusion

The English Version education system in Bangladesh, though relatively new, plays a vital role in bridging the gap between local and global educational standards. It offers students a pathway to compete in an international level while still being rooted in the national curriculum. However, this system faces significant challenges, including the lack of qualified teachers, experienced teachers, high costs, and the weakness of textbooks which are translated from the Bangla version. Addressing these issues requires collaborative efforts from policymakers, educators, and stakeholders to ensure accessibility, affordability, and quality in English Version education. With the right strategies, this system can effectively prepare students for a dynamic global future while maintaining national values and priorities.

8. References

1. Billah M. Education Policy. How English Version Education Is Going on? 2011 [cited 2025 Apr 11]. Available from: masumbillah65.blogspot.com
2. Akhter S. Students gain little for high costs. New Age. 2023 Feb 13 [cited 2025 Apr 11]. Available from: <https://www.newagebd.net/article/194385/students-gain-little-for-high-costs>
3. Rashid HU. Lack of quality books, teachers hampers education. The independent. 2017 Nov 23 [cited 2025 Apr 11]. Available from: <https://theindependentbd.com/post/124939>
4. Mousumi MA, Kusakkabe T. Proliferating English-Medium Schools in Bangladesh and Their Educational Significance Among the Clientele. Journal of International Development and Cooperation. 2017;23(1 & 2):1-13.
5. Hamid MO, Erling EJ. English in Education in Bangladesh: Pathways to Globalization or Inequality? Current Issues in Language Planning. 2016;17(1):36-56.
6. Prodhan M. The Educational System in Bangladesh and Scope for Improvement. Journal of International Social Issues. 2016 [cited 2025 Apr 11]. Available from: <https://www.winona.edu/socialwork/Media/Prodhan%20The%20Educational%20System%20in%20Bangladesh%20and%20Scope%20for%20Improvement.pdf>
7. Hossain A. Lack of quality books, teachers hampers education. The independent. Cited by: Rashid HU. 2017 Nov 23 [cited 2025 Apr 11]. Available from: <https://theindependentbd.com/post/124939>
8. Chawdury SI. Lack of quality books, teachers hampers education. The independent. Cited by: Rashid HU. 2017

- Nov 23 [cited 2025 Apr 11]. Available from: <https://theindependentbd.com/post/124939>
9. Rahman M. Challenges and Prospects of English Version Schools in Bangladesh. *Journal of Education and Development*. 2019;5(2):45-60.
 10. Sultana S. English as a Medium of Instruction in Bangladesh: Policy and Practice. *Asian Englishes*. 2018;20(1):35-53.
 11. Rahman MM, Pandian A. The Gap between Policy and Practice in Language Education: The Case of Bangladesh. *Asian Englishes*. 2018;20(2):100-115.
 12. Chowdhury R, Kabir AH. Language, Education, and Neoliberal Globalization: A Critical Analysis of English in Bangladesh. *Critical Studies in Education*. 2014;55(2):100-115.
 13. Hamid MO. Planning for Failure: English and Language Policy in Bangladesh. *Current Issues in Language Planning*. 2011;12(1):21-43.