

An Investigation into the Perceptions, Believes, Barriers, Scopes and Qualifications of Bangladeshi Non-native English Teachers for Global English Language Teaching

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ABSTRACT

As English is an international language, the growing demand for English language teachers is increasing day by day. English teachers from different countries have got a lot of prospects in the field of teaching English. However, the question is how much priority is given to the non-native speakers of English language to teach English worldwide. The present condition of Bangladeshi English teachers is not so clear to many. Bangladeshi English teachers do have a lot of potentials in the field of global English language teaching. But, are they given the priority as non-native speakers of English to teach English abroad? The categories set by the native and non-native English-speaking countries for teaching English worldwide need to be clear to them. English language teachers of Bangladesh should know about their qualifications, trainings, approaches and preparations to compete with others in the global fields. So, proper guideline is needed to make them good competitors. This paper is concerned with the scopes of Bangladeshi English teachers for teaching ESL/EFL, measurement of the ability of Bangladeshi English language teachers in comparison with the native English language teachers, and the educational background, training, and strategies needed to become a good competitor for teaching English worldwide.

1. INTRODUCTION

English language teaching is an enterprise with different businesses that fulfills different requirements. English language is considered to be the lingua franca of international trade, education, science, technology, aviation, diplomacy, tourism, and, even entertainment. Globally, today the number of non-native speakers of English exceeds the number of native speakers. English is used by more people than any other language. Bangladeshi English language teachers, who want to build up their career in global English language teaching, need to realize and accept the fact that they are in a competition, and, they need to be aware of vast teaching opportunities globally. Although the native English speakers continue to dominate in teaching English worldwide, Bangladeshi English teachers must know and believe that the scope for teaching English globally is still wide open. English Language Teaching can be enacted through onsite and online approaches. People learn English basically for three purposes: academic, business and general purposes. Bangladeshi English language teachers must understand the importance of Global English Language Teaching; they need to have a clear idea about the global field and scope of English language teaching; and, they should make them qualified enough to compete with other native and non-native English language teachers in the world.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

There are many misconceptions about teaching English worldwide. Bangladeshi English language teachers are still not clearly aware of the global opportunities for them. They are yet to establish their demand as global English language teachers. Sometimes, they find it hard to compete with the native English language teachers because of the lack of knowledge about global opportunities. They need proper certification and training to make them well-deserved candidates in the field of global language teaching.

Galloway, N., & Rose, H. (2015), in their book, *Introducing Global Englishes*, show the distinction between ELT and GELT clearly. They deny the

superiority of native speakers over the non- native speakers in terms of Global English Language Teaching (GELT).

Smith, L. E., & Rafiqzad, K. (1979), in their article, “English for Cross-Culture Communication: The Question of Intelligibility”, published in the journal TESOL Quarterly also talk about the limitations of native English language teachers. Native speakers of English also need training like the non-native speakers of English for teaching ESL/EFL at the international level.

My paper makes an investigation into the scope and ability of Bangladeshi non-native English language teachers in comparison with the native English language teachers and also tries to sort out the barriers in this regard, and the ways to remove these barriers.

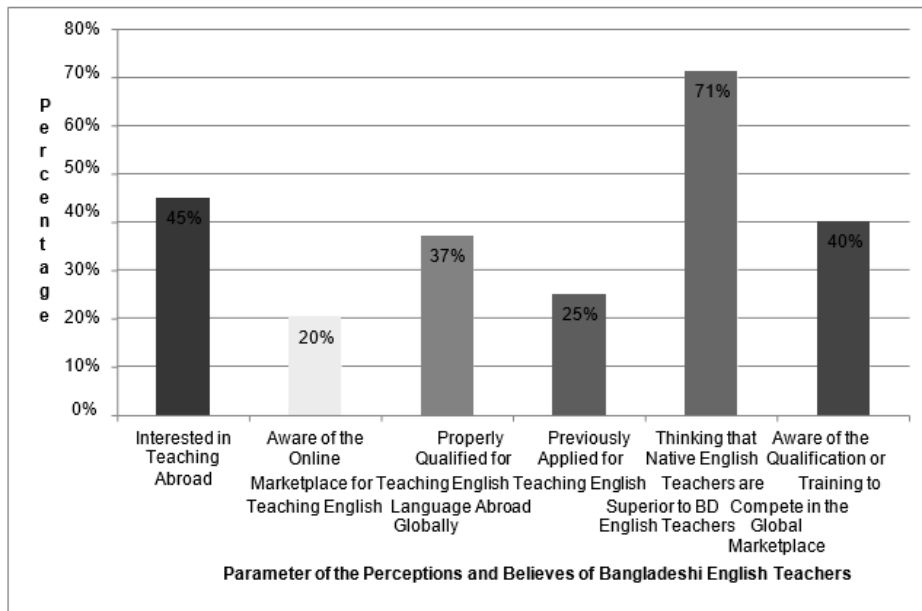
3. METHODOLOGY

Both qualitative and quantitative approaches have been applied in this research paper. Various books, journals, and internet websites have been used for this purpose. Primary data has been collected by interviewing English language teachers and lecturers from different schools, colleges, and universities; and a set of research questionnaire has been used for this purpose.

4. OBSERVATION AND FINDINGS

Perceptions and Believes of Bangladeshi English Teachers about Global English Language Teaching

My personal observations are closely connected with the perceptions, attitudes, and believes of the Bangladeshi English teachers about the global opportunities for teaching English. In this process, 100 teachers/lectures in English who were randomly chosen from different schools, colleges, and universities of Bangladesh were interviewed. Some interviews were conducted face to face and some were interviewed through mobile phone. The teachers’/lecturers’ perceptions and believes questionnaire are shown in the Appendix. The data relating to positive notion or ‘Yes’ responses obtained through the questionnaire are presented in percentage by using this column graph below:



The column graph shows that 45% Bangladeshi English language teachers are interested in teaching abroad, 20% of them are aware of the online marketplace for teaching English, 37% think that they have got right qualifications or training for teaching English worldwide, 25% have previously applied for teaching English abroad, 71% think that native English teachers are superior to Bangladeshi non-native English teachers for teaching English language globally and 40% Bangladeshi English teachers know what qualifications or training will make them good competitors in the marketplace for teaching English.

So, from my own observations some barriers to raise the global scopes and opportunities for Bangladeshi English teachers are as follows:

- lack of interest in teaching abroad
- lack of qualification or lack of consciousness about the qualification or training to teach English worldwide
- perceptions and believes regarding the superiority of the native industry of an English language teacher to teach English in the global marketplace

- lack of consciousness about the online marketplace for teaching English

5. A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF BANGLADESHI ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS AND NATIVE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS FOR TEFL/TESL

Bangladeshi English language teachers may feel that they will not get preference as TEFL/TESL teachers as like the native English teachers. It is, of course, a debatable topic whether it is more important being a native speaker or having proper qualifications. A comparative analysis between native English teachers and the non-native English teachers will reveal the ability of Bangladeshi English teachers in the global marketplace for teaching English.

In the competitive field of global English language teaching the main issue is not only better qualification anymore – it is also connected with uniqueness. Many English language teachers, even after being non- natives, have got the same qualification, language proficiency, and credentials like the native English language teachers, which, finally, do not equally qualify them for teaching English globally.

Smith and Rafiqzad (1979) mention that native speakers of English have got serious problems about comprehending the variations in English spoken around the globe. So, the native speakers need proper training for using English in the international level. Non-native speakers also need training for using English with both native speakers and non-native persons.

Campbel et al. (1982) think that presently such training is not adequately dealt with in the field of EFL and ESL.

Smith (1983) demonstrate that native speakers should study English as an international language if they want to interact in English with non-natives or with other native speakers using different national varieties.

“The basic problem in miscommunication is caused by two false assumptions:

1. If a person has got native like grammar, lexis, and phonology, appropriate communication will automatically follow;
2. Ways of speaking and discourse patterns of all fluent speakers of English are the same.”

(ibid)

So, English grammar, lexis, and phonology are essentials but not sufficient. Both native and non-native speakers require appropriate training and assistance to use English as an international language for communication because there are different functions of English in different cultures.

According to Galloway and Rose (2015), Pack (2005) conducted a research with the UK students at the University of Birmingham. The results show that, students from the Far East expect a native English-speaking teacher while studying abroad in a native English-speaking country. On the other hand, when these students judged the qualities of the teachers, the nativeness of the teacher's English did not rank as highly as other characteristics. Students emphasized the teacher's sensitivity and response to their learning needs and problems as the most important characteristics; they were also concerned about clear explanations and pronunciations of the teacher. Professional qualifications were more important to them than ethnicity. (as cited in Galloway and Rose, 2015: 196)

Galloway and Rose (2015) give further reference, Cook (2005) conducted a research on the younger students (aged 14, on an average) and adults in six different countries. He found out that among the English language learners those who preferred a native English-speaking teacher were 72 percent of children in England, 33 percent of children in Belgium, 82 percent of adults in England, and 51 percent of adults in Taiwan. In his survey, it was evident that apart from England, native English speaking teachers were not an overwhelming preference. Students also opined that non-native English language teachers often have got better training, background, and teaching skills despite their worse fluency. (as cited in Galloway and Rose, 2015: 210)

Galloway and Rose (2015) mention that the internationalization of English has precipitated the need to understand the new global role of the language; it is becoming very clear that a critical evaluation of ELT practice worldwide is required. They emphasize on the fading priority of the Native-English speaker in terms of the globalization of English. They propose for a change in the approaches to ELT, thereby raising consciousness about Global Englishes. This approach is known as Global English Language Teaching (GELT). (p. 196)

Now, it can be argued that well-qualified native English teachers should get priority only in their own countries for teaching English, but not for teaching English worldwide.

When the question of priority in terms of global English language teaching arises, both the native English language teachers and Bangladeshi

English teachers need not only certification and language skill, but also training in the field of English language teaching.

6. WORLDWIDE SCOPE OF BANGLADESHI ENGLISH TEACHERS FOR TEFL/TESL

Taking into consideration the global demand of English teachers, the Institute of Modern Languages (IML) at North South University (NSU) organized an interactive seminar, titled “Teaching English Globally: Opportunities and Requirements” on August 20, 2013.

Rajib Ahmed, a faculty from the Department of English of Najran University, Najran, KSA (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia) participated in that seminar as a key speaker and presenter.

He mentioned that English teachers usually have got more opportunities in the countries where people speak English as a second/foreign language (apart from L1). According to Ahmed, the global opportunities for non-native English teachers include China, KSA, Thailand, Qatar, Yemen, Oman, Kuwait, UAE, Turkey, Japan etc.

He then suggested that applicants should apply as much as possible and in as many places as possible as in this way they can to get more opportunities. He also suggested some websites to seek for better TEFL/TESL opportunities: www.teach.com; www.seriousteachers.com; www.jobs.ac.uk; www.tefl.net; www.eslcafe.com; www.teachaway.com; www.jobsabroadbulletin.co.uk; www.eslstarter.com; www.esl-teaching-jobs.com; www.gooverseas.com; www.englishjobmaze.com; www.eslcareer.com etc. (IML Spectrum Seminar: Teaching English Globally: Opportunities and Requirements, August 20, 2013) Bangladeshi English teachers need to be aware of the online marketplace for teaching English globally. This awareness will open more and more opportunities for them in the global marketplace for English language teaching.

Top English language teaching schools for non-native teachers are Amazing Talker, 51Talk, Palfish, iTutorGroup, italki etc. (Teaching English online as a non-native speaker, 2023)

7. REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS, TRAININGS AND PREPARATION TO COMPETE WITH OTHERS IN THE FIELD OF GELT

Ahmed, in the seminar, “Teaching English Globally: Opportunities and Requirements”, held on August 20, 2013, at NSU campus emphasized on what and how should be the prefecture of an English teacher of the 21st century. He

mentioned that the teacher's CV should be updated and that s/he needs to have access to Personal Learning Networks (PLN). Moreover, the teachers' affiliations with language teaching associations, e.g., BELTA (Bangladesh English Language Teachers Association), IATEFL (International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language), etc. will be an added advantage. They should participate in different seminars, workshops, and symposia to keep themselves upgraded. Teaching English by using multimedia and technology (Mlearning, iPads, Blackboard, Podcasts) is another basic requirement at present, which will add a new dimension to their teaching methodology. He further opined that they should have the knowledge about the social world (Blogging, Twitting) and that they should maintain positive attitudes towards it. (IML Spectrum Seminar: "Teaching English Globally: Opportunities and Requirements", August 20, 2013)

Some suggestions for Bangladeshi English language teachers to become demandable English language teachers in the global marketplace are as follows:

- Bangladeshi English language teachers need the right certification at the very outset. A TESOL or CELTA certification will give them the ultimate ticket to apply for teaching English in the international level. TESOL certification courses are available in British Council and in the international TEFL academy. The British Council at Bangladesh also offers CELTA program; and the duration of the program is four weeks. One can apply for these certification courses just after his/her graduation in English.
- If s/he wants to attain an M.A. in ELT/TESOL from a Bangladeshi University s/he needs to be selective and that s/he needs to make sure that the degree is internationally accepted as it is a matter of GELT. S/he can go for M.A. in TESOL at IML (Institute of Modern Language) of the University of Dhaka (DU), M.A. in TESOL at North South University etc. to get the priority in the marketplace of GELT. But, even after having a Master's degree in English, CELTA certification is mandatory for one to teach English language worldwide.
- Bangladeshi English teachers need to aim at those countries where the socio- psychological distance between the teacher and the learner is less. If a Bangladeshi English teacher wants to teach in Asian countries, the socio-psychological distance would be less and

teaching and learning would be effective. But, if a Bangladeshi English teacher wants to teach in any European country, the socio-psychological distance would be greater and that the distance may affect both the teacher and learner in a negative way.

- Teaching English globally would be more effective if the teacher previously gains some knowledge about the people, culture, and language of the country where s/he would like to teach. If possible, a short course on the language of the country where s/he wants to teach English would make him/her more competent.
- Some teaching experience would be an added advantage for Bangladeshi English teachers to teach English worldwide.
- Bangladeshi English language teachers are not much aware of the online marketplace for teaching English globally. So, language teaching institutions or centers in Bangladesh should introduce an online marketplace for them; thereby give them an opportunity to practice their English teaching skills with an aim to compete in the global marketplace for English teaching.
- BELTA (Bangladesh English Language Teachers' Association) can organize seminars on the global opportunities for Bangladeshi English language teachers with an aim to raise their awareness about the world market.

8. CONCLUSION

It is quite natural that a native English teacher will usually get preference for teaching English worldwide. If one looks for a Bangla teacher, definitely s/he not prefer an English man teaching Bangla. However, from discussion made above it is clear that as English is an international language and as it is a matter of Global English Language Teaching (GELT), priority of the native English teachers is really a matter of concern. Right type of certification, qualifications, trainings, and experiences will open the door for all non-native English teachers to teach English worldwide. At present, there are many non-native English teachers who are teaching English language globally. So, the marketplace for Bangladeshi English teachers is wide open today.

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APPENDIX

Teachers’ Perception and Belief Questionnaire:

Dear English teachers/lecturers,

Please respond to the following queries neutrally. Your response will be used for research purpose. Please put a tick mark in the designed boxes according to the parameter.

	Yes	No	Confused/ Not sure
1. Are you interested in teaching abroad?			
2. Are you aware of the online marketplace for teaching English?			
3. Do you have the right qualification or training for teaching English Language worldwide?			
4. Have you ever applied for teaching English abroad?			
5. Do you think native English teachers are superior to Bangladeshi non-native English teachers for teaching English language globally?			
6. Do you know what qualification or training will make you a good competitor in the marketplace for teaching English worldwide?			