

**DESIGNING AND DEVELOPING AN EAP
MODULE FOR ARTS FACULTY
UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN
BANGLADESH**

TANZILA SHAHID

UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA

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**DESIGNING AND DEVELOPING AN EAP
MODULE FOR ARTS FACULTY
UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN
BANGLADESH**

by

TANZILA SHAHID

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

GDP	Gross Domestic Product
USD	United States Dollar
BA	Bachelor of Arts
NAPE	National Academy for Primary Education
PTI	Primary Training Institutes
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
BHEI	Bangladesh Higher Education Institutes
EAP	English for Academic Purposes
EMI	English as the Medium of Instruction
GPA	Grade Point Average
HSC	Higher Secondary Certificate
SSC	Secondary School Certificate
UGC	University Grants Commission
EGAP	English for General Academic Purposes
EOP	English for Occupational Purposes
ESAP	English for Specific Academic Purposes
ESP	English for Specific Purposes
NA	Needs Analysis
CNP	Communicative Needs processor
PSA	Present Situation Analysis
EFB	English for Business
ADDIE	Analyze Design Development Implementation and Evaluation
CLIL	Content and Language Integrated Learning
MBA	Master of Business Administration
PET	Preliminary English Test

DDR	Design and Development Research
READ	Ready Extract Analyse Distil
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
ORP	Open Response Participant
SD	Standard Deviation
BA	Bachelor of Arts
CGPA	Cumulative Grade Point Average
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
CVI	Content Validity Index
I-CVI	Item-Content Validity Index
S-CVI	Scale Content Validity index
TESL	Teaching English as a Second Language
NCTB	National Curriculum and Textbook Board

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MEREKA BENTUK DAN MEMBANGUNKAN MODUL EAP BAGI PELAJAR SARJANA MUDA FAKULTI SASTERA DI BANGLADESH

ABSTRAK

Penguasaan Bahasa Inggeris untuk Tujuan Akademik (EAP) adalah penting untuk kejayaan akademik. Namun, ramai pelajar menghadapi kesukaran dalam pembacaan, penulisan, pendengaran dan pertuturan akademik disebabkan oleh perbendaharaan kata akademik yang terhad, kesukaran memproses teks dan kuliah yang kompleks, serta kurangnya latihan dalam komunikasi akademik formal. Sebagai tindak balas terhadap isu ini, kajian ini mereka bentuk dan membangunkan modul pengajaran EAP untuk pelajar prasiswazah Fakulti Sastera di Bangladesh, berasaskan metodologi penyelidikan reka bentuk dan pembangunan (Richey & Klein, 2007) dan rangka kerja ADDIE. Analisis keperluan melibatkan 240 pelajar mendedahkan kesukaran ketara dalam semua kemahiran EAP, dengan pendengaran dan pertuturan merupakan aspek yang paling mencabar. Kajian ini turut mengenal pasti ketidakseimbangan penekanan terhadap kemahiran bahasa dalam kurikulum, pengajaran dan penilaian sedia ada. Berdasarkan penemuan ini, satu modul yang disasarkan telah dibangunkan dan disahkan oleh enam orang pakar. Modul ini kemudiannya dilaksanakan kepada 44 orang pelajar menggunakan pendekatan pengajaran eklektik. Penilaian pelajar menunjukkan tahap kepuasan dan keberkesanan yang tinggi. Penemuan ini menyerlahkan keperluan untuk latihan guru, penjajaran antara pengajaran dan penilaian, semakan semula kurikulum, dan penyepaduan teknologi. Kajian ini juga mencadangkan bahawa pembaharuan dasar adalah penting untuk mengurangkan kesan negatif seperti kesan backwash dan memastikan pengajaran serta penilaian lebih mencerminkan keperluan akademik pelajar.

DESIGNING AND DEVELOPING AN EAP MODULE FOR ARTS FACULTY UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN BANGLADESH

ABSTRACT

Mastery of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) is essential for academic success, yet many students struggle with academic reading, writing, listening, and speaking due to limited academic vocabulary, difficulty processing complex texts and lectures, and lack of practice in formal academic communication. In response to this issue, this study designs and develops an EAP teaching module for undergraduate Arts faculty students in Bangladesh, following the design and development research methodology (Richey & Klein, 2007) and the ADDIE framework. Needs analysis with 240 students reveals significant difficulties in all EAP skills, with listening and speaking being the most problematic. It also identifies an unequal emphasis on language skills in existing curricula, teaching, and assessments. Based on these findings, the study develops a targeted module, which is validated by six experts. The module is then implemented with 44 students using an eclectic teaching approach. Student evaluations indicate high levels of satisfaction and perceived usefulness. The findings highlight the need for teacher training, alignment between teaching and assessment, curriculum revision, and integration of technology. The study also suggests that policy reforms are crucial to mitigate negative impacts such as backwash effects and to ensure instruction and assessment better reflect learners' academic needs.

Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Bangladesh, a developing Muslim-majority South Asian country (Hamid & Erling, 2016) with a land area of 56,977 sq. miles or 1, 47,570 sq. k.m. (Statistical Yearbook Bangladesh, 2024) and total population of the country is 169,828,912 (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 2022) and a per capita GDP USD 2,499.70 (Bangladesh Economic Review, 2024), has a long history of English teaching and learning. It was introduced in the early 19th century by the company rule and the colonial administration in the subcontinent (Arafat & Mehnaaz, 2020; Noor, 2021). Macauley's (1835) Minutes on Indian Education recommended English education in the subcontinent (Chaudhury, 2013). Subsequently, English emerged as the central language of higher education, though Bengali was still in use.

For about one hundred and fifty years, English was the only language in the major sectors including administration, law courts and education in the subcontinent. After 1947, in Pakistan (also in East Pakistan which became an independent country, Bangladesh in 1971), English continued to enjoy the status of official language (Arafat & Mehnaaz, 2020), and it was taught and learnt as a symbol of prestige. English continued to function as the de facto official language in post colonial Pakistan where Urdu was the state language besides English. It continued to be used as the language of higher education, administration, social mobility and in all other dominant sectors till 1971 when Bangladesh came into being as an independent country.

Banu and Sussex (2001) explain that soon after the liberation of the country, Bengali became the national language and achieved the status of state language (Article 3, Bangladesh Constitution, 1973). It was given priority over all other

languages in the newly independent country, and the importance of English and all other foreign languages were significantly reduced. Bangla became the state language (Islam & Hashim, 2019), used as the medium of education and law courts (Chowdhury & Kabir, 2014). It constitutes the core of Bengali nationalism, which emerged mainly from the supreme sacrifices of the Bangalees in the language movement of 1952 when a number of heroic Bangalees were shot dead while they were struggling for establishing Bengali as the state language of East Pakistan. Since then, Bengali has become an integral part of Bangladeshi nationalism and identity. The nation has a profound respect, and a deep passion for Bengali.

The pro-Bengali nationalistic feeling in Bangladesh resulted in the reduction of the importance of English after the liberation of Bangladesh. Bengali replaced English as the official language (Rahman, 2019), and also as the medium of education and examination, and the medium of law courts, specially the junior courts. The role of English significantly reduced (Rahman, 2019), though it continued to be taught and learnt as a subject from class 1 to the BA degree level. Its status changed from a second to a foreign language. Bengali is the language for everyday communication in the country, as it is largely a monolingual country (Shurovi, 2014). Moniruzzaman (1979) explains that the Bengali wave of nationalism threw Urdu out but also displaced English, which ended up with Bengali (the first language) taking precedence at all sectors including bureaucracy, education, administration and judiciary.

In recognition of "people's desire and aspiration," the Bengali Enforcement Act (1987) was promulgated to make the use of Bengali compulsory for all offices, which resulted in the spread of Bengali everywhere, and English lost its importance in almost all sectors of the country (Banu & Sussex, 2001). English medium schools were banned (Banu & Sussex, 2001), though this was later revised. However, in recent years, a growing concern has emerged over learners' low level of English

proficiency, which poses a major impediment to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the 21st century. Gaining global literacy in English is now seen as essential. Approximately over 30 million students are learning English as a compulsory subject from Grade 1 in various pre-university educational institutions—making it one of the largest English-learning populations in the world (Hamid & Earling, 2016). As a result, the importance of English language proficiency is increasingly acknowledged, as reflected in various language policies and education commission reports issued intermittently.

1.1.1 Education Commissions

In independent Bangladesh different education commissions took different measures and made recommendations to facilitate English teaching-learning. Various measures were taken to increase the quality of English education but none became that much fruitful due to a number of reasons. Seven national education commissions were formed (Chowdhury & Sarkar, 2018; Shurovi, 2014). Few other important bodies were also formed to reform the education system which made different recommendations about English education in Bangladesh at different times but none of them were implemented successfully (Shurovi, 2014). The gists of the recommendations are as follows:

The first Bangladesh Education Commission (1974) defined English as a priority foreign language and recommended its teaching from class 6. An English Teaching Taskforce Commission constituted in 1976 recommended English teaching to start from class 3 or class 6 depending on the availability of English teachers. Bangladesh National Education Commission (1988) also recommended English teaching from Grade 3 to Grade 6 as a uniform starting point for English education. In 1991, National Curriculum Committee recommended teaching of English as a compulsory subject from class 3. National Education Policy (2000)

recommended the followings:

- (1) English medium instruction was recommended for kindergarten, curriculum was reformed accordingly and all the text materials used in the kindergarten were translated into English;
- (2) English was introduced as an extra subject from class 1 and 2 and as compulsory subject from class 3;
- (3) English could be the medium of instruction from class 7 or secondary level along with Bengali;
- (4) English was emphasized as the medium of instruction at the tertiary level.

National Education Commission (2003) also made a number of recommendations for English education, which include:

- (1) Introducing English from the primary level;
- (2) Acquainting the primary level learners with English language skills as a foreign language;
- (3) Redesigning English curriculum;
- (4) Improving facilities for foreign training for PTI trainers and NAPE and local training were recommended for secondary school teachers;
- (5) Emphasis has been given on a six-month English language course at the tertiary level.

National Education Policy (2010) also made the following significant points about English:

- (1) English is recognized as an essential tool for building knowledge-based society;
- (2) Writing and speaking English has been emphasized from primary school;

- (3) English has been recommended as a compulsory subject in all the streams from secondary level of education;
- (4) English has been recommended as a medium of instruction from secondary level;
- (5) Appointing adequate number of English teachers at secondary level;
- (6) English is recommended as a compulsory subject at the tertiary level;
- (7) Both English and Bengali have been recommended as the mediums of instruction at the tertiary level;
- (8) Translation of books written in English to Bengali has been emphasized (Chowdhury & Kabir, 2014).

Despite repeated policy initiatives and the formation of multiple education commissions, English language reform in Bangladesh has yielded limited success. From the first education commission in 1974 to the National Education Policy of 2010, each has recognized the critical role of English in both national development and global engagement. These commissions consistently recommended early introduction of English, curriculum reform, enhanced teacher training, and the gradual use of English as a medium of instruction.

However, the core challenge has not been the vision behind these reforms, but their implementation. While the policies reflect an increasing recognition of English as a tool for advancement in a globalized world, the absence of systematic, context-sensitive execution has resulted in persistently low levels of English proficiency among learners. This shortfall remains a significant obstacle to achieving the country's broader educational and developmental goals.

1.2 Higher Education

Bangladesh higher education sector has enlarged remarkably in the last two decades (Sarkar & Hossain, 2020). While three types of higher education institutions

are found in Bangladesh. They are public, national, and private universities which are primarily governed by University Grants Commission. The number and quality of public universities have increased significantly in recent times. Higher education of Bangladesh offers a 4 year Honors course for the Bachelor's degree or 3 year pass-course, two years Master's course or one year for those who have Honors graduate degrees or two years Master's course for pass graduates (Monem & Baniamin, 2011). All the Public universities in Bangladesh arrange admission tests to admit students for tertiary education. Bhuia et al. (2016) mention that "According to the existing provision in Bangladesh, students must sit in an admission test to enroll in a public university" (p.10). Academic results of previous secondary school certificate and higher secondary certificate examinations (SSC and HSC) are considered important in the selection procedure in the admission test.

The results in these previous respective examinations indicate that students with higher grade point average (GPA) had higher possibility of enrollment in the university admission tests. Considering the number of qualified students based on previous results in public examinations, different public universities in the country have some additional criteria for the students to fulfill to get admission into different programs. Chowdhury et al. (2009) explain that "As the number of applicants possessing the required academic achievements are still more than the available seats, every university has to further sort out the applicants by other criteria like the score in the university arranged admission test" (p. 53), in order to admit the best students in different departments.

Higher education sector is relevant to the present study as it contextualizes the higher education landscape of Bangladesh, where the target participants of this research—undergraduate students—are situated. Understanding the structure, admission process, and academic pathways of higher education institutions in Bangladesh helps justify the need for a contextually appropriate teaching module.

As the aim of the present research is to design and develop a teaching module for undergraduate students, it is essential to highlight the educational framework within which these students operate.

1.3 EAP Approach in the Higher Education of Bangladesh

Although after the liberation of Bangladesh in 1971, Bengali was given the status of state language (Hamid & Erling, 2016; Rahman et al., 2019) and Bengali replaced English as the official language and as the language of education and examination, English has been taught and learnt as a compulsory school subject, and it remained an important language for higher education. It is being increasingly realized that as English is in great demand in the present globalized professional world, university graduates will fall back if they cannot communicate effectively in English.

Research findings (Akteruzzaman & Islam, 2017; Ali, 2020; Khan, 2000) indicate that a large number of students completing higher secondary education attain a much lower level of English language proficiency than the target requirements. In their research report, Khan and Akhter (2011) mention that “Although English is a compulsory subject at every level and students spend a long time in learning it, the standard of English of the learners is not satisfactory in comparison to the time they spend in learning the language” (p.11). To address this situation, the universities of Bangladesh have introduced one or more foundational English language courses or English for academic purpose courses to prepare the tertiary graduates for academic progress (Rubel, 2019). In 1992, the government of Bangladesh passed legislation to make an English course of 100 marks compulsory for all subjects at the tertiary level to help the students cope with the new developments of the technologically advanced global world (Banu & Sussex, 2001; Chaudhury, 2009; Chowdhury & Kabir, 2014).

At present, undergraduate programmes are offered in 54 public and 112 private universities in the country (UGC report, 2022-2023). All these tertiary-level

institutions in Bangladesh are offering English for Academic Purposes courses in different names in the very first semester and sometimes second semester of the undergraduate programme to remediate students' existing gap of English language skills and help them with their academic studies during their university education (Basak, 2016; Chowdhury & Kabir, 2014). Chaudhury (2013) states that, as English is the basic survival skill, graduates must be well equipped with this skill. The basic goal of English for academic purpose (EAP) course or foundational course is to help students with English language proficiency required for higher education during their university study of the specific discipline/subjects. Chowdhury and Haider (2012) mention that "The English language courses taught at the tertiary level are usually EAP courses, since the objectives of these courses are not only to give students a practical command of English but also to enable them to use the language in the study of their fields of specialization" (p. 93).

Currently, EAP courses in higher education in Bangladesh have received special attention for meaningful higher education. Mostly the intention of the EAP courses or foundational courses offered in tertiary education is to help students with their academic studies conducted in English (Basak, 2016). As future professional success mostly depends on the successful completion of the tertiary graduation, these EAP or foundational courses "prepare them to do well at their tertiary education offered in English" (Riya & Kabir, 2019, p. 370).

1.4 Context

The present study is set in the context of Bangladesh's higher education system, where admission to public universities is highly competitive and governed by centralized entrance examinations. These exams, as stipulated by national education policy and institutional guidelines, assess students in Bangla, English, and discipline-specific subjects (Alam & Alam, 2022). This merit-based structure

admits students from diverse academic backgrounds, many of whom come from Bangla-medium institutions with limited English language exposure. As a result, adapting to English as the medium of instruction at the tertiary level poses substantial challenges for these students (Mridula & Ahsan, 2025). Although English is the language of instruction in most higher education institutions, many students continue to struggle with English for Academic Purposes (EAP), particularly in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Prolonged exposure to English in classroom settings does not necessarily translate to proficiency, often due to reliance on rote learning, outdated pedagogical practices, and limited opportunities for communicative engagement (Mridula & Ahsan, 2025).

This study focuses on one of the country's leading public universities, comprising 8 faculties and 34 departments. Special attention is given to the Faculty of Arts—the oldest and most established faculty—and its undergraduate students, who have remained largely underrepresented in both research and curriculum development. These students face persistent EAP challenges due to their linguistic background and the lack of a targeted, needs-based curriculum. Existing English courses, such as basic English or academic writing, are offered by most departments but often fall short of meeting students' specific academic needs. Notably, no dedicated EAP curriculum, module, or syllabus has been developed for the Arts faculty. By addressing this gap, the study aims to shed light on the distinct language learning needs and academic challenges of this overlooked group. A detailed discussion of the EAP context in Bangladesh is presented in Chapter 2.

1.5 Problem Statement

English is globally recognized as the dominant academic language, making proficiency in English essential for effective higher education of international standards. As a result, many universities worldwide adopt English as the medium of

instruction (EMI) in education and examinations (Basak, 2016). Simbolon (2021) emphasizes that EMI plays a crucial role in the internationalization of higher education, a policy adopted by universities in many non-native English-speaking countries, such as Malaysia (Kabilan, 2007), Japan (Aizawa & Rose, 2018), and Bangladesh (Rahman et al., 2022). In this context, English for Academic Purposes (EAP) becomes vital for students aiming for international academic engagement because it equips students with the specific language skills needed to engage successfully in academic tasks conducted in English (Charles, 2013). Students need to develop academic literacy skills that enable them to read, interpret without relying on context, critically examine, write about, and apply critical thinking strategies to a range of sources from different fields of study (Lannon, 2016)—all of which are essential in EMI (English Medium Instruction) environments. These would lead to improved academic performance, greater participation in international academic communities, and enhanced opportunities for further study or employment in global contexts.

Recognizing the importance of EAP, both public and private universities in Bangladesh offer foundational English courses to help students overcome language difficulties (Chowdhury & Kabir, 2014; Rubel, 2019). These courses typically emphasize reading comprehension, grammar in context, writing, listening and speaking skills. However, studies (Akteruzzaman & Sattar, 2020; Dutta, 2019) report persistent challenges among students in mastering EAP. For instance, Harun et al. (2016) highlight limited oral presentation skills; Munira (2017) observes an overemphasis on exam-oriented study; Hossain (2017) notes difficulties with vocabulary and fluency; Afrin (2016) points out writing challenges including grammatical issues and lack of motivation; and Sultana (2016) identifies problems in reading comprehension, such as interpreting complex texts. All these point to a mismatch between the objectives of existing English courses and the actual

academic language needs of students in Bangladeshi universities. Despite the availability of foundational courses, students continue to struggle with essential EAP skills (Muniruzzaman & Afrin, 2024), suggesting that these courses may not be adequately aligned with the demands of academic tasks at the tertiary level. This highlights the need for a needs-based, skill-integrated EAP module that directly addresses students' real academic challenges.

Among the most affected are Arts faculty students at the tertiary level, primarily from Bangla medium backgrounds, face considerable challenges in adjusting to English-medium syllabuses, texts, assignments, and projects (Hossain, 2017). Despite the widespread availability of foundational English courses, these students often continue to struggle with core EAP skills due to a prior educational experience rooted in rote memorization and limited exposure to academic writing, critical thinking, and oral communication. The absence of contextual materials in the EAP course makes it difficult for Arts faculty students to connect it with their own academic disciplines, leading them to focus solely on passing the course rather than engaging meaningfully (Basak, 2016). Additionally, there is a distinct misalignment between the academic needs of Arts faculty students and the structure of current syllabi and examination systems (Shahid & Kabilan, 2025), which fails to equip them with the necessary competencies to succeed in English-medium academic environments. These overlapping challenges—pedagogical, curricular, and contextual—underscore the need for a skill-integrated, needs-based EAP module designed to bridge these gaps and support the development of EAP skills of Arts faculty students.

A major factor contributing to these difficulties is that most tertiary-level students come from Bengali medium schools, where English is taught as a compulsory subject (Grade 1 to 12) but not used as the medium of instruction (Afrin, 2016; Hossain, 2017). This gap between prior schooling and the language demands

of higher education results in academic challenges. One of these challenges, as Suchona and Urmi (2019) argue, is that students are rarely exposed to academic reading in school, with curricula emphasizing rote memorization over communicative skills. Chowdhury and Kamal (2014) further contend that students are underprepared for the complexity of university-level academic discourse, facing challenges such as topic unfamiliarity, vocabulary deficits, grammatical errors, first-language interference, and language-related anxiety (Ali, 2020; Islam & Stapa, 2021; Rani, 2020).

Kabir (2023) highlights that while listening and speaking are included in the curriculum of Bangladesh, they are insufficiently evaluated in public examinations, leading to these skills being largely overlooked. Furthermore, teacher-centered classrooms and students' natural shyness limit participation, hindering language development (Rubel, 2019). Additional challenges include grammatical inaccuracies, weak vocabulary, disorganized writing, lack of critical thinking, and poor academic integrity (Rahman et al., 2024). A significant contributing factor to these issues is the shortage of well-developed instructional materials (Islam, 2020). Collectively, these problems underscore the lack of a well-structured and unified EAP instruction that directly addresses students' academic needs and supports their overall language development.

The current syllabuses in Bangladeshi universities often overlook key elements of effective curriculum design, neglecting both lower-order and higher-order subskills (Haque, 2017). Foundational theories such as Hutchinson and Waters' (1987) learning centered approach and Flowerdew and Peacock's (2001) context-sensitive EAP instruction are largely ignored during curriculum development. Haque (2017) also criticizes the top-down nature of curriculum planning, which disregards student needs and contextual realities due to the absence of a systematic needs analysis. As a result, EAP courses frequently adopt general

language models that fail to address students' academic and subject-specific needs. This approach not only leaves students underprepared for the demands of their disciplines but also exacerbates disparities among learners from diverse educational and socio-economic backgrounds (Nahiyani et al., 2025). This disconnect underscores the urgent need for a more responsive curriculum development process. A needs-based, context-related EAP teaching module could bridge these gaps by aligning course content with students' actual academic language needs.

The existing curriculum in Bangladesh relies on long-established, conventional instructional approaches (Mallik & Alam, 2018), with most syllabus content focused on grammar-related topics (Rahman & Debnath, 2017). It emphasizes reading and writing while offering little to no opportunity for assessing the essential skills of speaking and listening. Furthermore, the course objectives are misaligned with the instructional content and assessment methods (Akter & Khanum, 2023), resulting in a narrow focus on linguistic form over meaningful communication, which limits students' ability to use English effectively in academic contexts. As a result, students often struggle to follow English-medium instruction, produce accurate writing even at a basic level, and adapt to the existing university-level teaching approaches and modules (Akteruzzaman & Sattar, 2020). The misalignment between EAP curricula and students' academic needs hinders academic literacy development, necessitating urgent, context-specific reforms to address these fundamental limitations (Nahiyani et al., 2025). These issues highlight the need for a properly designed, needs-based module that can effectively address students' English for Academic Purposes (EAP) challenges and support their academic success.

Although foundational English and EAP courses were introduced in all public universities in the 1994–95 academic session to strengthen students' English proficiency (Khan & Chaudhury, 2013), these efforts have proven insufficient. The existing courses are often generic and fail to address students' academic, linguistic,

and disciplinary needs (Mallik & Alam, 2018). These shortcomings are rooted in deeper issues, such as the absence of systematic needs analysis and the persistence of outdated instructional practices (Riya & Kabir, 2019; Wali, 2018). If EAP courses in Bangladeshi universities are not quickly improved, they may end up widening the gaps between students from different educational and socio-economic backgrounds, instead of supporting all learners equally (Nahiyen et al., 2025). This misalignment between what students actually need and what is taught in the classroom highlights the urgency of introducing more needs-focused, tailored EAP instruction. A context-specific teaching module could help bridge this gap by directly addressing students' real academic challenges.

There is a noticeable scarcity of needs-based modules aimed at developing English for Academic Purposes (EAP) skills among higher education students in Bangladesh. One notable example is the module developed under the Transforming English Language Skills in Higher Education in Bangladesh (TELSHEB) Project. This initiative, led by the British Council Bangladesh in collaboration with the University Grants Commission (UGC), university lecturers across the country, and consultants from Canterbury Christ Church University, UK, was designed to improve English language instruction for both students and faculty. The project was informed by a comprehensive needs analysis survey that examined the current state of English language teaching and the use of English as a medium of instruction in higher education. However, such efforts remain limited in scope. Therefore, there is a pressing need to design and implement a robust, needs-based EAP teaching module that addresses the academic language challenges faced by tertiary-level students in Bangladesh.

Based on the above discussion, this study aims to design and develop an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) teaching module for undergraduate students in the Arts faculty at a public university in Bangladesh. By conducting a thorough

needs analysis, the study seeks to help students overcome the challenges they face with EAP skills in their tertiary education.

1.6 Research Objectives and Research Questions

Phase 1: Needs Analysis

Research Objectives

- RO 1: To investigate the target needs and learning needs of Arts faculty students in relation to English for Academic Purposes.
- RO 2: To determine the current proficiency level of Arts faculty students in EAP, with a focus on their deficiencies.
- RO 3: To examine whether the current curriculum addresses the identified target needs and learning needs of Arts faculty students in EAP.

Research Questions

- RQ 1: What are the target needs and learning needs of Arts faculty students in relation to English for Academic Purposes?
- RQ 2: What is the current level of EAP proficiency among Arts faculty students, with a focus on their deficiencies?
- RQ 3: To what extent does the current curriculum address the identified target needs and learning needs of Arts faculty students in EAP?

Phase 2: Design and Development

Research Objectives

- 4.a. To design and develop an EAP teaching module for Arts faculty students.
- 4.b. To assess the EAP teaching module through formative evaluation by experts.

Research Questions

- 4.a. What are the appropriate EAP components to be included in designing and developing an EAP teaching module for Arts faculty students?
- 4.b. What is the experts' evaluation of the EAP teaching module?

Phase 3: Implementation and Evaluation

Research Objectives

- 5.a. To implement the EAP teaching module.
- 5.b. To evaluate the EAP teaching module through feedback from the students with whom it was implemented.

Research Questions

- 5.a. How is the EAP teaching module implemented?
- 5.b. How do the students with whom the EAP teaching module was implemented evaluate it?

1.7 Rationale of the Study

Higher education in Bangladesh is dominated by English, which is highly valued in society due to its power, status, and role in global communication (Hasan, 2022). Consequently, the government has placed significant emphasis on developing English language skills across all levels of education (Wali, 2018). English is the official language of the country and serves as the medium of instruction at the tertiary level (Islam et al., 2022). At this juncture, proficiency in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) is crucial for student success in higher education.

The present study aims to explore the EAP needs of undergraduate students in a public university's Arts faculty. Since English is the medium of instruction in both public and private universities in Bangladesh (Islam et al., 2022), identifying students' academic English needs and designing an appropriate needs-based EAP module is essential to help them navigate academic challenges effectively. Recognizing this importance, the government passed a 1992 legislation mandating a 100-mark compulsory English course for all tertiary-level students (Chowdhury & Kabir, 2014). In response, departments and faculties introduced English courses aimed at enhancing students' proficiency for academic and professional purposes (Khan & Chaudhury, 2013).

However, it is not a common practice in higher education in Bangladesh to conduct thorough needs analyses to determine students' language needs or areas of difficulty, nor to incorporate such findings into course or module design. The present study addresses this gap by conducting a needs analysis and designing an EAP module tailored to Arts faculty students. This initiative is intended to enhance the quality of undergraduate education and could serve as a milestone in higher education in Bangladesh.

While several studies highlight students' challenges with English for Academic Purposes effectively (Ahmmed et al., 2020; Chaudhury, 2009; Mallik & Alam, 2018), most fail to provide context-specific solutions or actionable teaching strategies to address these issues. Additionally, many existing course development efforts tend to focus on a single language skill—such as writing or reading (Farkas & Jung, 2019; Phoodokmai, 2011)—without adopting an integrated approach. In contrast, the present study aims to develop a comprehensive EAP module that incorporates all four essential language skills—reading, writing, listening, and speaking—along with grammar and vocabulary. This integrated and learner-centered approach is expected to better support students in meeting the academic demands of their university education (see thorough research gap in Chapter 2, Literature Review).

In an era marked by Web 2.0, Industrial Revolution 4.0, and Education 4.0, global advancements are reshaping classroom dynamics. However, Bangladesh's tertiary education system is not yet equipped to align with these global trends due to the lack of EAP-focused instruction. The current foundational English courses are disconnected from international academic demands. A needs-focused EAP module can bridge this gap by preparing learners to access knowledge from diverse sources and overcome their academic English difficulties.

This study not only addresses previously overlooked academic needs but also lays a foundation for future research and pedagogical innovation. It offers a model that

can be adapted by other universities in Bangladesh and beyond, helping non-native English-speaking students overcome EAP-related challenges in higher education.

1.8 Significance of the Study

This study holds particular significance for teachers, as it provides them with a systematic understanding of students' academic English challenges. By identifying the actual EAP needs of undergraduate Arts faculty students, the research equips teachers with insights that can inform their classroom strategies and teaching materials. The teaching module developed through this study is grounded in learners' real challenges and expectations, enabling instructors to align their pedagogical approaches with what students genuinely require for academic success. It also offers a replicable framework for instructors to assess and refine existing EAP syllabi in their own contexts.

For students, especially those in public universities in Bangladesh, this study is directly beneficial. English is a global language (Imam, 2005), and in the Bangladeshi context, it also serves as a language of prestige (Hasan, 2022). Since tertiary-level students across all disciplines are required to complete English courses to graduate (Alam, 2022), having an adequate command of academic English is essential. However, despite studying English from Grade 1 to 12, many students fail to communicate effectively (Akhtaruzzaman & Sattar, 2020; Chowdhury & Sarkar, 2018). This research targets this critical gap by proposing a needs-based EAP module that helps students overcome their English difficulties. It ensures that students are not only better prepared for academic tasks but are also more equipped for professional communication.

The study is also significant for educationists and researchers, as it emphasizes the necessity of needs-focused priorities in higher education. Unlike prior literature that primarily reflects top-down educational reforms, the current study

captures ground realities and addresses previously overlooked factors. It sheds light on the actual needs of learners, drawing attention to the importance of designing curricula and modules that respond to student feedback and analysis. This work will help future researchers and curriculum developers understand the value of conducting needs assessments prior to implementing specialized courses.

For educational institutions and policymakers, the study offers a strategic model for course and curriculum development. Public universities in Bangladesh rarely undertake thorough needs analyses before introducing EAP or foundational English courses. As a result, existing syllabi often lack alignment with students' real academic needs. This study presents a structured methodology—from needs assessment to module design and implementation—that institutions can adopt to enhance the quality of tertiary education. It also documents students' EAP needs, current proficiency levels, and the mismatch between curriculum components and learner requirements, offering a blueprint for future curriculum reform.

Moreover, the findings serve as a valuable record of the students' academic English expectations and the existing gaps in course content, syllabi, exam patterns, grading policies, and departmental practices. These insights can guide other universities in designing EAP modules tailored to their own contexts. By following the framework of the present study, institutions can implement effective, needs-based English modules that enhance both teaching and learning outcomes.

1.9 Limitations of the Study

The present study designs and develops an EAP teaching module for the Arts faculty students studying in a public university of Bangladesh. As the study focuses only on the first two semesters excluding students from other semesters, thus the results of needs analysis cannot be generalized for all students.

The other limitation is that the study focuses at a specific point of time and

the EAP needs of the undergraduate students are never fixed; these might differ from time to time due to different situations, and courses or curriculum should accommodate these needs. Thus, the findings of the study may not represent the future academic English needs of the undergraduate students as needs vary from one student to another and also change from time to time.

1.10 Operational Definitions

1.10.1 English for Academic Purposes

English for Academic Purposes (EAP) is a branch of ESP that focuses on the specific needs of English for different academic fields of study. It is a recent field of English teaching-learning that received much importance globally. English for Academic Purposes (EAP) refers to the use of English in educational settings, typically at the tertiary level, though it may also apply to secondary education. It is defined as the teaching of English with the specific goal of enabling learners to effectively study, conduct research, and participate in academic life using the language. Hyland(2006) claims that, "EAP aims at capturing 'thicker' descriptions of language use in the academy at all age and proficiency levels, incorporating and often going beyond immediate communicative contexts to understand the nature of disciplinary knowledge itself"(p. 2). The British Council first used this term in 1975 (Johns, 1981). Hyland and Hamp-Lyons (2002) mention that this field came into existence as a branch of ESP only in the early years of 1980s. EAP has developed as a result of the large number of non native students enrolment in English-medium universities in native English speaking countries a few decades back. It is intended to help the students with English required for higher studies.

1.10.2 Needs Analysis

It is the first step of ESP, and its branches EAP and EOP programmes. Needs analysis is defined as a process of exploring the needs of a group of learners

in a language teaching-learning program. Needs Analysis (NA) refers to gathering information regarding target needs and learning needs of the learners that help determine the goals and objectives of a course or syllabus. According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987), needs analysis is crucial not only for syllabus design, lesson planning, and material development, but also plays an integral role in evaluating courses, syllabi, and the overall curriculum. Robinson (1991) considers needs analysis as being central to ESP, although ESP is not the only educational enterprise which makes use of it" (p.7). Needs analysis involves the systematic collection of information regarding learners' language needs from various sources within a specific context. This information is essential for evaluating existing language programs and for designing courses, developing materials, and creating appropriate assessment tools.

1.10.3 Learning Needs

Learning needs refer to what learners must do in order to acquire the skills and knowledge required for academic success. These needs relate to the learning process itself, including learners' preferred strategies, the types of input and instruction they respond to best, their motivation levels, and classroom engagement. Understanding learning needs offers insights into how students approach language learning and what conditions help or hinder their progress.

The present study explores these learning needs by conducting a systematic needs analysis of undergraduate Arts faculty students in a public university. By identifying learning needs, the study ensures that the proposed English for Academic Purposes (EAP) teaching module is aligned not only with what students need to learn, but also with how they learn best. This focus on learning needs strengthens the learner-centered nature of the module and supports more effective language development in real academic contexts.

1.10.4 Target Needs

Target needs, as one of the two types of needs identified by Hutchinson and Waters (1987), refer to the specific use of English required in a target situation. They involve “what the learner needs to know or do in the target situation” (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987, p. 54). These needs are categorized into three components: necessities, lacks, and wants. *Necessities* are the language requirements dictated by the target situation. *Lacks* refer to the gap between a learner’s current proficiency and what is required. *Wants* reflect the learner’s own perception of what they wish to learn. The present study investigates the target needs of undergraduate students by identifying their necessities, lacks, and wants with regard to the EAP skills essential for success in tertiary education.

1.10.5 Module

Modules play a vital role in the learning process as they offer a “self-contained, formally structured learning experience with a coherent and explicit set of learning outcomes and assessment” (Donnelly & Fitzmaurice, 2005, p. 3). Their standalone nature enhances flexibility in teaching and learning, as noted by Marnah et al. (2021, p. 2), who highlight that a module “has the advantages of being able to stand alone.” According to Imron et al. (2022), a teaching module is a well-organized instructional unit developed with specific objectives to support effective learning. In line with this, the present study designed and developed a teaching module comprising 14 units aimed at enhancing the EAP skills of Arts faculty students.

1.11 Summary

This chapter presents an overview that establishes the background and rationale for conducting the research. It discusses the status of English language education in Bangladesh, the role of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) in higher education, and the specific context of the study. Together, these elements offer a

comprehensive understanding of the research setting. The chapter also lays the foundation for designing a needs-focused EAP module aimed at supporting undergraduate students in the Arts faculty of a public university in Bangladesh in addressing their EAP related challenges effectively.

A review of previous studies reveals the absence of a standardized, needs-based module, course, or curriculum for teaching EAP skills at the tertiary level in Bangladesh. This significant gap has motivated the researcher to undertake the present study, with the goal of designing an appropriate EAP teaching module tailored to students' academic needs and facilitating their success in higher education.

Chapter Two

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to review previous literature related to the present research and provide a solid foundation to the rest of the study. The previous research related to the present study revolves around the research questions and research objectives mentioned in the previous chapter. This present chapter intends to gain insights from a thorough review of available literature to get proper scope of the present research. The literature review covers important areas relevant to the present research including emergence of EAP, concept of needs in education, needs analysis, theories of needs analysis and module development. This chapter presents a theoretical overview which narrows down the research area of this present study.

The major focus of this study is to design and develop an EAP teaching module through identifying the challenges of the undergraduates studying in a public university in Bangladesh. The literature review chapter discusses all the theoretical aspects which are relevant to EAP, needs analysis, course development and module design. The chapter also illustrates previous studies conducted on needs assessment, course development and module design in different educational contexts which help to develop the conceptual framework which serves as the blueprint of this research.

2.2 English for Academic Purposes

English for Academic Purposes (EAP) focuses on the specific language patterns and required communication skills needed for formal academic study of any discipline or faculty in higher education. It is “for the acquisition of general linguistic and sociolinguistic skills in English and for the development of academic competence necessary to carry out study and research both in a home country and