

BRIDGING LANGUAGE, LIFELONG LEARNING, AND SUSTAINABILITY: SCOPE OF REAL-WORLD ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING IN BANGLADESHI HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract: This study examines the potential of real-world learning (RWL) in English language teaching in Bangladeshi higher education, which is an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. Our exploration is guided by the ‘quality education’ objective of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and lifelong learning perspectives. We used a mixed methods approach to capture student views through a survey at six higher education institutions and semi-structured interviews with faculty members, academic leaders, and university policy makers. The findings show gaps in collaborative learning, industry alignment, and stakeholder engagement which hinder the students’ critical skills and employability. The study highlights the need for interdisciplinary learning, policy investment, and faculty training to bridge academia-industry gaps. Consequently, it offers insights into curriculum innovation and sustainable education for enduring the impact. The novel contributions of the study include the scope of RWL within an EFL environment; and fresh insights into curriculum innovation, faculty development, and policy reforms aimed at advancing sustainable development.

Keywords: English language education; higher education; lifelong learning; real-world learning; sustainable development

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Recent literature on English language teaching (ELT) in Bangladesh’s higher education reveals a pressing need to move beyond traditional instruction toward outcome-oriented and skill-based learning that meaningfully prepares graduates for the demands of the modern world. Equally important is connecting classroom learning to real-world contexts through interactive, inquiry-driven, and technology-supported pedagogies that align English proficiency with labor market

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demands. However, despite growing awareness and recognition of these needs, research on feasibility of applied or practical learning through ELT in Bangladeshi higher education remains limited.

To address this gap, our study investigates the extent, scope, and faculty members' readiness for implementing real-world learning (RWL), a pedagogy that bridges educational theory and practice by enhancing learners' employability and industry readiness (Morley & Jamil, 2021), in ELT within Bangladeshi higher education. Guided by the 'quality education' objective of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), we explore how RWL can promote sustainable and skill-oriented teaching. The findings offer new insights into curriculum innovation, faculty development, and policy reform to advance quality and sustainable higher education in Bangladesh which is an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted in 2015 as part of the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, is a shared global responsibility for transformative change in areas including economy, education, and health (United Nations, 2019). One of the seventeen interconnected SDG objectives is ensuring quality education for poverty eradication and socioeconomic progress. An essential approach to reaching this goal is preparing youths and adults with lifelong learning competencies which they can use in employment and private enterprises (English & Carlsen, 2019; Vieira, 2020). Lifelong learning is the set of skills that help learners understand the world and societies, develop effective learning habits, and encourage innovations (Gorghiu et al., 2013; as cited in Kaplan, 2016). According to the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning,

Lifelong literacy covers the full spectrum of lifelong and life-wide learning and involves a continuum of proficiency levels that require institutionalized learning systems which are flexible and support integrated approaches at all stages of a person's life and in a diversity of life situations ... (UNESCO, 2017, p.2).

Lifelong learning skills are applicable for occupational and individual needs in a constantly changing world (Klug et al., 2014).

In addition, lifelong learning in higher education can play an important role in enabling a learner to act as an active agent in the society. In the rapidly changing industries, employees are expected to gain new skills and offer quick responses. As their careers progress, they also look for institutions which understand their needs. In that vibe, different academic programs are offered by higher education institutes emphasizing both soft and hard skills using real-life problems. Taken together, lifelong learning has become the 'evolving future of higher education' (Harvard Extension School, 2020).

However, embedding lifelong learning in higher education curricula requires balancing of multiple objectives. For example, university students are not only expected to acquire traditional knowledge and skills but also to cultivate critical insights and adaptable attitudes toward cultural diversity and practical understanding. Therefore, to be effective, lifelong learning should integrate both formal education and recurrent real-world experiences, equipping learners with essential competencies to navigate practical challenges. This is where real-world learning (RWL), experiential and applied forms of education contributing to students' personal and

professional developments (Rau et al., 2019), comes in. RWL can facilitate lifelong learning through authentic academic activities (Morley & Jamil, 2021). Examples of RWL feature include external facing curricula, research-informed teaching, work-based learning, and academia-industry links. Consequently, implementing RWL on higher education can address the core ethos of various purposes of learning and their implications in wider spectrums of society, such as economy, equity, and empowerment of the people.

The shift toward RWL is not merely a pedagogical enhancement but a strategic response to the evolving demands of the global workforce. For instance, recently, universities in the UK are focusing more on academic-industry partnerships to enhance graduate employability (Office for Students, 2019). Similarly, a ‘demand driven system’ was implemented for developing efficient workforce in Australian higher education (Bridgstock & Cunningham, 2016), and job-focused academic programs involving enhanced industry experiences in Vietnam (Nguyen, Tran, & Le, 2019). These initiatives underscore the argument that higher education must go beyond traditional theoretical instruction and embed practical, external-facing and real-world learning to remain relevant.

While higher education is expected to strive for economic competitiveness, ensuring its sustainability remains uncompromised (Abad-Segura & González-Zamar, 2021). According to Chankseliani et al. (2021), this phase of formal education should have the capacity to enable ‘glonacal’ (global, national, and local) development.

Bangladesh is aiming to reach at the standard of a developed country by 2041. This endeavor requires to focus on creating knowledge-based economy (Hassan, 2022). The country has already synchronized its national strategy in seventh five-year plan with SDGs despite the constraints of resources. Over the last decade, the average public education spending in the country was consistently lower than other low-income countries (Osmani, 2018). According to a report of the Financial Express, Bangladesh spends less than 2.5 per cent of its gross domestic production (GDP) on education although the United Nations recommends spending in this area at least 4.0 per cent of the GDP (The Financial Express, 2023). This indicates a shortage of resources in education delivery and its quality improvement. Yet, policies have been proposed for promoting mass education and to build broad-based human capital which is a precondition for equitable growth (Gethin, 2025).

There are also some active considerations in areas of lifelong learning. Bangladesh’s National Skills Development Policy 2011 acknowledges the need for lifelong learning and many institutions in the country are also working to adopt it (Ministry of Education Bangladesh, 2011). However, like most other South Asian countries except Sri Lanka, Bangladesh has been delivering ‘weak and relatively ineffective adult and lifelong learning’ (Ahmed, 2014). As a result, about one-third of the higher education graduates in the country remain unemployed due to skill mismatch (Arab, 2025; Assadekjaman & Afroz, 2025; Bayes, 2019).

In Bangladesh, there are three types of higher education institutions: degree colleges (public and private), university colleges (public and private), and universities (public and private). Generally, degree and university colleges are affiliated with the National University of Bangladesh, with a few exceptions that are attached to public universities. Contemporary curricula, more specifically for English Language Teaching (ELT), in Bangladeshi higher education is claimed to broadly promote critical thinking, creativity, and inquiry-based teaching

(Islam et al., 2024; Mahmud et al., 2025; Rafi, 2024). These elements are essential ingredients for applied and lifelong learning. However, despite any structured research or evaluation, it is widely perceived that the overall educational standards of English language teaching (ELT) in the country have declined in recent decades (Hamid, 2011; Rahman & Pandian, 2018). Although development aids have been coming to expand and enhance the quality of English language education, impactful implementation of realistic schemes by designated authorities remains inadequate (Hamid & Erling, 2016). Even the impact of the implemented schemes is often scattered, weak and disappointing (Al Marzan, & Akanda, 2025; Haque, 2022;). To overcome this drawback, educational practitioners and researchers have proposed several approaches and actions. For example, Islam and Das (2024) recommend embedding soft skills in curricula to enhance graduates' employability, Bayes (2019) suggests simultaneous handling of employment demand, supply mismatch, and university-industry links, and Higher Education Quality Enhancement Project (HEQEP) of Bangladesh's University Grants Commission (2015) highlight the need for teachers' capacity enhancement, particularly for adopting any non-traditional teaching methodology.

In this article, we acknowledge the above state and challenges linked to ELT in Bangladeshi higher education. The literature and our professional experiences indicate a persistent gap between English education and employability skills leading to graduate unemployment and a mismatch between academic outcomes and labor market demands. A key challenge is the lack of suitable educational innovation and their effective implementation. To address this gap, we explore the scope of RWL approach to long-term, applied and life-long learning, within this context. To evaluate the feasibility of the approach, we investigate the following three research questions.

1. To what extent are RWL elements present in traditional English language teaching at Bangladeshi universities?
2. What is the scope of RWL in current language education policies linked to Bangladeshi higher education?
3. To what extent are the English language educators prepared for RWL-based English language teaching?

METHOD

To gain answers for the research questions, we followed a critical and mixed methods approach to investigation using a perception survey (written in English and Bengali for ensuring accessibility and understanding) with students and semi-structured interviews with faculty members, academic leaders, and university top officials/policy makers.

Survey

The participants of this study were current undergraduate students enrolled in different academic programs across the disciplines of Arts and Humanities, Business, Social Sciences, and Pure and Applied Sciences. Data were collected from six higher education institutions which were selected using a purposive-convenience sampling approach. This strategy was employed

to ensure feasibility of access and diversity of institutional representation while maintaining the study’s focus on English language education.

The purposive dimension of the sampling was guided by the overarching research aim which was to capture perspectives of undergraduate students participating in English language learning across varied institutional and disciplinary contexts. Accordingly, institutions were selected to reflect heterogeneity in the following dimensions:

- University types and sources of funding: public and private universities, and colleges under the National University
- Locations: higher education institutions based in cities and rural/semi-urban areas
- Academic disciplines: Arts and Humanities, Business, Social Science, Pure and Applied Science

In total, 144 undergraduate students participated in the survey, representing two public universities, two private universities, and two colleges under the National University system. The inclusion of these diverse institutions allowed for a broader understanding of student experiences across different educational and socioeconomic settings within Bangladesh’s higher education landscape. To maximise participation and accommodate varying levels of technological access, the questionnaire was made available in both online and paper-based formats.

Participation in the survey was entirely voluntary, and respondents were informed of the study’s purpose and procedures prior to data collection. The researchers assured participants of the anonymity and confidentiality of their responses. This approach encouraged honest and reflective participation from students across the sampled institutions.

Apart from five demographic information (gender, prior education, university type, academic discipline, and English learning experience), the survey questionnaire contained eighteen items (see Table 1) in the following three broad themes which are defining features of real-world learning in higher education (Morley & Jamil, 2021).

- Individuality: critical thinking, problem solving, and creativity
- Mutuality: experiential and applied activities
- Technical and professional skills: academia-industry links, and external facing and work-based learning

Table 1. Survey Items

Individuality	English language courses help improve questioning skills.
	English language courses involve tasks on solving practical problems.
	In English language courses, there are no activities to analyse issues critically.
	English language courses involve tasks on investigating practical issues.
	In English language courses, there are no opportunities to learn from mistakes.
	English language courses provide opportunities to reflect on personal learning experiences.

Mutuality	There are collaborative tasks in the lessons of English language courses.
	English language courses do not discuss global issues.
	There are topics on social issues in English language courses.
	English language courses allow me to share criticisms on various issues.
	In English language courses, there are opportunities to share personal views.
	English language courses do not engage local communities in the lessons.
Technical and professional skills	English language courses do not develop business communication skills.
	English language courses help understand various career options.
	English language courses improve job search and interview skills.
	English language courses do not involve guest lecturers from external companies or industries.
	English language courses help improve entrepreneurship skills.
	English language courses help me improve my digital literacy skills.

The participants responded to survey in a five-point Likert scale (Likert, 1932): ‘Strongly agree’, ‘Agree’, ‘Not sure’, ‘Disagree’, and ‘Strongly disagree’. These anchors represent an ordinal continuum of agreement, ranging from a strong positive endorsement to a strong negative evaluation of each statement. This five-point format was selected for its clarity and respondents’ accessibility and ease of interpretation, which are particularly advantageous in survey research involving participants from varied academic disciplines. The full survey questionnaire, including the Likert-scale items, is presented in Appendix 1.

Data Processing, Reliability and Validity Checks, and Analysis Procedure

We processed the completed questionnaires with SPSS, Version: 29.0.0.0 (241), using ascending Likert scale which means assigning 5 for Strongly Agree and 1 for Strongly Disagree responses. Item numbers or statements 4, 6, 7, 12, 13, 14, and 17 of the original questionnaires were negative (to reduce response bias), so we conducted reverse coding for them and analyzed the data thereafter.

We conducted internal consistency reliability and construct validity checks for the survey (the demographic questions were excluded as they are independent factual variables) by Cronbach’s Alpha (Cronbach, 1951) test and Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA).

Overall internal consistency reliability score of the survey tool was 0.87 (Cronbach’s Alpha) which is ‘Good’ according to the interpretation of George & Mallery (2003, p.231).

Table 2. Cronbach’s Alpha Score

Cronbach’s Alpha	Cronbach’s Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.873	.882	18

Individually, most items showed moderate to strong item-total correlations (.40 -.72). Items 9, 17 and 18 showed relatively low but acceptable correlations (.38 -.41). The only exception

was item number 22 (-.005) as removing this item could increase alpha to .889. We carefully examined this item and found it linguistically clear and meaningful as well as relevant to our research themes. It is possible that the low correlation is due to relatively a small sample, so we kept this item in the questionnaire, mainly to address the digital literacy, an essential academic and employment skills, of students for conceptual completeness.

We also conducted an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) to assess the construct validity of the survey tool. Prior to this, we evaluated the data's suitability for factor analysis. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was .86, indicating adequacy of the sample for factor analysis (Kaiser, 1974). Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was also significant confirming that the correlation matrix was not an identity matrix and that the variables were sufficiently correlated to justify factor analysis (see Table 3 below).

Table 3. KMO and Bartlett's Tests

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.860
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1008.960
	df	153
	Sig.	<.001

We then performed a principal component analysis with Oblimin rotation. Five components had eigenvalues greater than 1, accounting for a cumulative 63.93% of the total variance. This suggests a satisfactory level of explained variance for social science research (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010). Similarly, our examination of the Pattern Matrix indicated that items loaded meaningfully on their respective components, with most factor loadings exceeding .60. This signifies strong relationships between items and their underlying constructs. The pattern of loadings demonstrated minimal cross-loading, supporting the discriminant validity of the identified factors. Overall, the results of the exploratory factor analysis indicate that the items appropriately represent their intended constructs, providing evidence of construct validity for the instrument.

We analyzed the data through Mean scores and correlations between the three broad themes (see Table 1). The Mean scores are the 'arithmetic average' of responses (Fink, 1995) which we interpreted as (i) 1 to 1.99: low, (ii) 2 to 2.99: average, (iii) 3 to 3.99: modest, and (iv) 4 to 5: high in the findings and the discussion. We employed the Pearson Correlation Coefficient (Bivariate Correlation analysis) to examine the strength and direction of the linear relationships among the three thematic groups of variables in our study. We chose this statistical test because it is appropriate for assessing linear associations between continuous variables and to determine whether these relationships are statistically significant (Myers, Well, & Lorch Jr., 2010). To decide the levels of strength of the relationship, we followed these cut-off points: < 0.1 weak, < 0.3 modest, < 0.5 moderate, < 0.8 strong, and > 0.8 very strong (Muijs, 2011, p.111).

Interviews

In the interviews, there were six participants including two university leaders, two academic program leaders, and two teaching staff. To ensure anonymity, we have used codenames, namely Approver, Planner, and Implementer instead of their real names (see Table 4) in reporting the data.

Table 4. Interview Participants

Professional role and workplace	Area of expertise	Codename used in the article
Vice Chancellor of a private university having rich academic development experience	Policy making	Approver-1
Head of department at a large public university having many years of academic program management experience at all types of higher educational institutes in Bangladesh	Policy making	Approver-2
Head of department at a large public university having many years of ELT experience	Academic leadership	Planner-1
Senior academic having program leadership experience in ELT at private universities	Academic leadership	Planner-2
Mid-career English language faculty member at a large public and technical university situated in a semi-urban area	Teaching	Implementer-1
Mid-career English language faculty member at a large public university situated in the capital city	Teaching	Implementer-2

In the interviews, we asked the participants the following questions along with some sub-questions for further clarification and example.

1. Please share a few important features of the English language programs offered at your university.
 - a. What learning outputs do they produce in the course?
 - b. How is the experience of your faculty members?
 - c. What about students? How do they find the courses?
 - d. What are the key objectives of those courses?
2. Do your students get opportunities to apply their learning of English language while studying at the university?
 - a. Can you give one or two examples?
 - b. Are there any challenges in those activities?
3. Do the English language programs at your university help students in their life after university?

- a. What academic areas can the students improve?
- b. What professional areas can they improve?
4. Are there any teaching, learning and management areas of your English language courses that you think need changing?
 - a. How are you planning to bring the changes?
 - b. What challenges are you anticipating?
 - c. How will you address those challenges?

Please see Appendix 2 for the detailed interview guide which we followed in this study.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The survey results mainly respond to Research Question 1 and the interview findings address Research Questions 2 and 3. Taken together, they provide a bigger picture of the state of ELT in Bangladesh, particularly related to the policies and practices associated with RWL, English language education, and lifelong learning at various types of higher educational institutions. In this section, we present descriptive statistics with the survey results and thematic analysis of the interview data and show their links to the research questions.

Survey Results

The survey data provide a brief background of the research participants (see Figure 1). In terms of gender, the male and female participants were nearly equal in number. More than three-fourth students learned through Bangla in their previous education, and the medium of instruction was English for the remaining students who followed English medium and English version curricula. About half of the total participating students were from private universities and the remaining 41% from public university and 11% from colleges under the National University. Academic discipline wise student numbers were similar (about 30%) for Arts and Humanities, Business, and Pure and Applied Sciences. Students studying Social Science subjects were about 10%. About three-fourth of the students had one to three years of English language learning experience at university level, and about one-fifth did not receive an English language course at their university at the time of data collection.

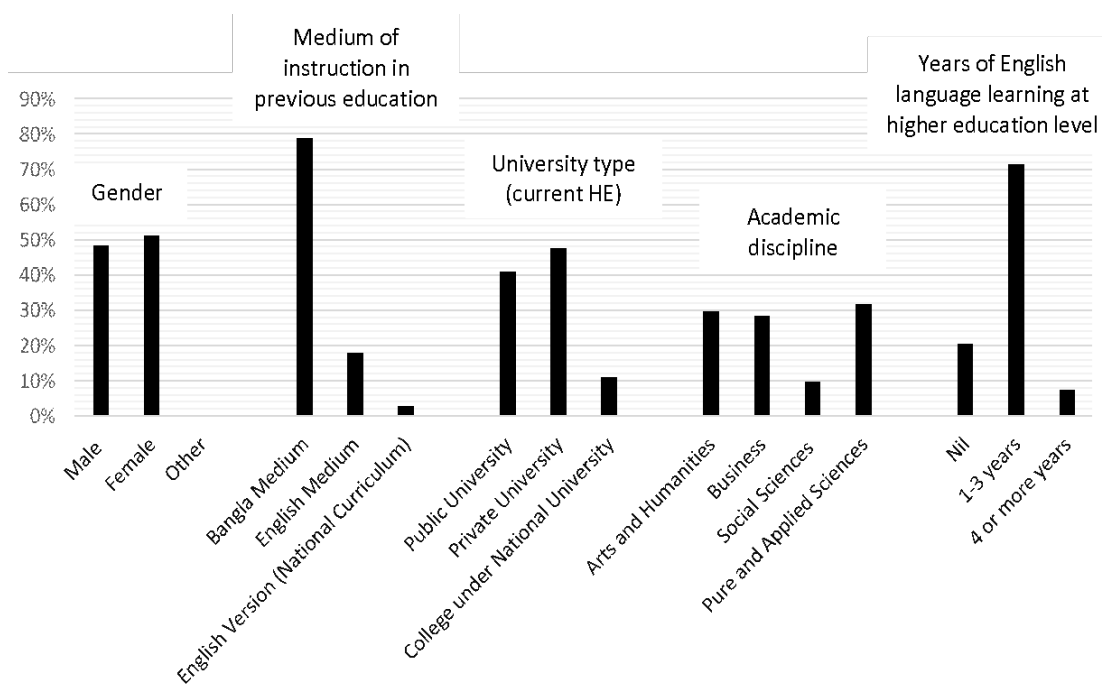


Figure 1. Gender, medium of instruction in previous education, university type, academic discipline, and English language learning experience of the survey participants

The Mean scores, reported in Table 5, provide an answer to the Research Question 1 (the extent of RWL elements in traditional ELT at Bangladeshi universities). Additionally, the correlations between three aspects of real-world English language education further explain the influence and relationships between these elements of learning.

The Mean scores of ‘individuality’ aspect (critical thinking, problem solving, and creativity) were generally just below 4 and similar among the survey participants based on gender, medium of instruction in previous education, university type, academic discipline, and English language learning experience. However, there were slightly higher (above 4) Mean scores in this area among private university and English medium students as well as those who studied English for more than three years. This indicates a stronger exposure these students received to practice critical thinking, problem solving, and creativity in English language courses (see Table 5).

Table 5. Mean Scores of ‘Individuality’ Aspect of Real-World English Language Education

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Gender	Male	70	3.89	.50419
	Female	74	3.87	.69547

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Medium of instruction in previous education	Bangla medium	114	3.84	.64566
	English medium	26	4.06	.41080
	English version (National Curriculum)	4	3.88	.41667
University type (current HE)	Public university	59	3.64	.63386
	Private university	69	4.08	.56561
	College under National University	16	3.90	.34894
Academic discipline	Arts and Humanities	43	3.88	.68267
	Business	41	3.92	.47452
	Social Sciences	14	3.82	.40543
	Pure and Applied Science	46	3.86	.69947
Years of English language learning at higher education level	Nil	30	3.68	.34722
	1-3	103	3.92	.65757
	4 or more	11	4.09	.58387

Then, all the Mean scores of ‘mutuality’ aspect (experiential and applied activities) were below 4 indicating a modest presence of experiential and applied activities including collaboration and sharing of personal views (see Table 6).

Table 6. Mean Scores of ‘Mutuality’ Aspect of Real-World English Language Education

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Gender	Male	70	3.80	.54446
	Female	74	3.67	.64840
Medium of instruction in previous education	Bangla medium	114	3.70	.63283
	English medium	26	3.88	.45352
	English version (National Curriculum)	4	3.80	.43833
University type (current HE)	Public university	59	3.50	.60806
	Private university	69	3.96	.54298
	College under National University	16	3.59	.44708
Academic discipline	Arts and Humanities	43	3.65	.65284
	Business	41	3.80	.51222
	Social Sciences	14	3.60	.43222
	Pure and Applied Science	46	3.79	.66522

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Years of English language learning at higher education level	Nil	30	3.48	.36711
	1-3	103	3.78	.62650
	4 or more	11	3.92	.72020

Similar to the ‘mutuality’ aspect, the Mean scores for the technical and professional skills (academia-industry links, and external facing and work-based learning) were also below 4 (see Table 7). This shows the scope of including such skills in English language learning in Bangladeshi higher education.

Table 7. Mean Scores of ‘Technical and Professional’ Aspect of Real-World English Language Education

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Gender	Male	70	3.55	.60283
	Female	74	3.47	.63730
Medium of instruction in previous education	Bangla medium	114	3.47	.63863
	English medium	26	3.68	.54349
	English version (National Curriculum)	4	3.50	.43033
University type (current HE)	Public university	59	3.36	.67083
	Private university	69	3.60	.55968
	College under National University	16	3.68	.59151
Academic discipline	Arts and Humanities	43	3.43	.67779
	Business	41	3.68	.56934
	Social Sciences	14	3.62	.46881
	Pure and Applied Science	46	3.40	.62606
Years of English language learning at higher education level	Nil	30	3.56	.40703
	1-3	103	3.48	.66606
	4 or more	11	3.59	.68461

Overall, the survey participants reported a modest presence of individuality, mutuality, and technical and professional elements in English language programs at the universities. Only exceptions were private university and English medium students as well as those who studied English language for more than three years on individuality aspect whose perceptions contributed to slightly higher Mean scores (critical thinking, problem solving, and creativity).

The data exhibited a very strong relationship between individuality, mutuality, and technical and professional aspects in English language education (see Table 8). This means the presence

or absence of any real-world and lifelong learning element influenced the presence or absence of other two elements of real-world and lifelong learning in English language education.

Table 8. Correlations between Three Aspects of Real-World English Language Education

		Individuality	Mutuality	Technical and professional
Individuality	Pearson Correlation	1	.799**	.611**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001	<.001
	N	144	144	144
Mutuality	Pearson Correlation	.799**	1	.625**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001		<.001
	N	144	144	144
Technical and professional	Pearson Correlation	.611**	.625**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	
	N	144	144	144

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Interview Results

The survey data exhibited modest extents of RWL practice in English education at universities in Bangladesh. The semi-structured interviews revealed the scope of RWL (Research Question 2), particularly its links with English language education policy and faculty member development strategies. The findings also demonstrated teacher-preparedness and possible ways to improve their professional capacity for implementing real-world English language teaching (Research Question 3). While the following three key themes emerged from the interview data, the narratives are derived from participants' statements which reflect the core meanings conveyed in their responses.

The Missing Link between Language Education and Stakeholders' Needs

According to the interview findings, situating RWL objectives in language education appears to be a steppingstone for preparing the learners for employment and personal enterprises. In this regard, the expectations from the higher education language courses play a crucial role. The successful application of real-world English language education requires addressing the learners' needs and teachers setting course objectives. As stated by Planner-1, there is a missing link between RWL and language education in Bangladeshi higher education.

The process of setting the objectives [of English language programs] is vague as there is no rigorous research or structured need assessment to design the course to meet the purposes. So, we didn't focus on the skill development or the demand issue or purpose of labor market (Planner-1).

The interviewees commonly thought that the rationales of the English language courses offered at universities and their roles in preparing learners to meet demands of the labour market are often neglected in the syllabus design process. For example, Implementer-2 believed “the [English language education] departments are not valuing the quality language classes, what is being taught or what to be taught, in line with the labor market”. Similarly, Planner-2 considered that “most of the courses are designed solely based on assumptions of teachers”.

RWL emphasizes connections between whatever being taught and for what reasons for better orienting the learners for the situations located beyond any teaching-learning space. While reflecting on the process of designing ELT courses and the issue of addressing experiences of graduates, Planner-1 acknowledged that “we [the planners and practitioners] never listened to our student perspectives or needs of labor markets before designing a course, and the materials”. Approver-1 echoed the same,

... unfortunately, teachers are not habituated to prepare course packs using primary sources like alumni ... [also] students who are joining classes could be my primary source who can contribute (Approver-1).

Planner-2 expanded the point linked to evidence-based language teaching syllabuses and suggested “linguistic data collection from different institutions and developing course accordingly” as a potentially benefitting approach.

The Lack of Competency and Human Capital

The demand of quality human capital has always been on the top in the competitive job market, although the bridge between demand and supply often appears as a concern. As already shared in the previous section, there is a possible missing link between industry needs and English language education at Bangladeshi universities. This section unfolds, from the experiences of the interviewees, how the lack of competencies among university students in Bangladesh makes a way for employers to outsource human capital from abroad.

According to Approver 2, “English has a definite role which we can’t deny, and it is set by external needs in global context”. However, “many foreigners work in Bangladesh, and they are syphoning away our revenue which is a challenge for our economy” (Approver-1). Approver-1 shared their experience of recruiting faculty members at their university who were ‘public university top graded graduates, but they lack communication skills to deliver lectures’. They also referred to a dialogue arranged by a leading daily of the country in which multinational company representatives shared that,

CGPA is the first door for interview to recruit people but after the initial screening, when job seekers appear for the oral and written test, they usually get depressed with their communication ability (Approver-1).

Approver-2 mentioned the same problem as they thought that “... the workforce who are migrating from Sri Lanka or Philippines, have higher skills than our [Bangladeshi] graduates and this tells us how far we are ...”.

Planner-1 indicated the problem that the “students lack linguistic ability to comprehend core messages of their subject”. As a result, plausibly their access to knowledge and communicating with that in the professional life remain inadequate. However, considering the interdependency between different countries along with the rise of knowledge economy, the importance of English has gone even higher, as Approver-1 indicated.

Students need more exposure of English to understand the depth of the content as the knowledge economy around us builds with English as the medium of instruction. So, to compete internationally, we need to develop our [students’] English language skills (Approver-1).

The Value of External-facing Language Education and Socially Responsive Learners

The interviewees emphasized the need for external-facing curricula which can engage with industry expectations and societal needs. While discussing the scope and compatibility of embedding RWL in English language curriculum in Bangladeshi higher education, they mentioned a few challenges linked to this. For example, Planner 2 expressed concerns regarding the lack of evidence and justification for designing such curricula.

The way we design syllabus doesn’t have good connection with different steps and stakeholders. The graduates who take jobs face problems in terms of language communication, [but] we don’t often take data [of the problems/difficulties].

Similarly, Planner 1 mentioned the reluctance of academics in addressing industry needs or learner preferences in the curriculum design.

... we [the university staff] never listened to our students’ perspectives or labor market needs before designing a course, or material. Teachers are found not to be motivated in this case as the reward for the task is very scant and not direct (Planner 1).

A common concern among the interviewees was the disconnect between academic instruction and real-world applicability of the learning content. Approver 1 highlighted that ‘teachers have the tendency to bypass real-world issues and instead they focus on syllabus completion’. Echoing this concern in a slightly different tone, Approver 2 pointed out that “when alumni are invited... they are not given chances to share their experiences...[and] interestingly they are not treated as expert”.

Building on the above concerns, Planner 2 suggested that “at university level, our approach should be professional which is at least in the blended form of top-down and bottom-up”. Approver 1 further reinforced this perspective, stressing the importance of aligning policies with external requirements, as “economic growth, quality education and communication skills are interlinked” (Approver 1). Similarly, Planner 1 underscored the value of involving alumni in curriculum development, recognizing their real-world insights as essential. This interviewee also proposed an effective strategy for integrating RWL into the curriculum by introducing a “linguistic internship” in various organizations, enabling students to understand and envision the practical significance of English language proficiency in professional settings (Planner 1).

In addition to the need for an external-facing English language curriculum, the interviewees emphasized the cultivation of well-rounded graduates. They highlighted that students must develop a robust ethical foundation and a deep sense of social responsibility alongside technical and disciplinary expertise. This integrative approach, they argued, is essential for preparing graduates to make meaningful contributions to sustainable development. In this regard, by referring to an interview published in a renowned national daily, Approver 1 said,

... the significance of real-world learning is not simply producing graduates, rather producing ethically driven graduates. This is very interesting and crucial too. With proper planning and training, real-world issues may be integrated in the syllabus and curriculum, but individuals' social responsiveness may not be addressed.

Approver 2 further expanded this issue by mentioning that,

It is a core objective to produce competent graduates, a goal shared across all fields of study. However, what about producing responsible citizens for a country? Are graduates truly good citizens? The extent of their awareness regarding both local and global ideologies and cultures should also be taken into account.

Overall, the interviewees considered that merely prescribing a language curriculum is insufficient. There is a critical need for creating a learning provision which not only provides learners with the English language skills required in the professional world and personal enterprises but also encourages them to reflect on their potential contributions to society and the wellbeing of others. This dual focus is essential for fostering well-rounded and socially responsible graduates.

Together, the findings from the survey and interviews show a nuanced understanding of the state and perceived future of real-world English language teaching in Bangladesh. The quantitative data indicate a modest yet interconnected presence of individuality, mutuality, and professional skills which suggest some presence and progress in fostering RWL. However, qualitative insights reveal systemic and pedagogical deficiencies, such as weak stakeholder engagement, limited needs analysis, and lack of industry linkage which hinder the meaningful implementation of these elements. Therefore, while a limited measurable progress is evident, the overall picture highlights a structural gap between curriculum design and its applications. As a result, our study indicates the need for evidence-based, socially responsive, and industry-oriented English Language Teaching (ELT) to ensure genuine integration of RWL objectives. These insights are further explained in below sections.

Discussion

The results of our study answer the three specific research questions and explain (1) the extent of the presence of real-world learning (RWL) in current English language education at Bangladeshi universities; (2) the potential for embedding or enhancing RWL within such an educational context; and (3) the professional readiness of faculty members required for implementing RWL-based English language instruction effectively. The findings show the value

of integrating RWL in English language education to foster lifelong learning and, in the process, the need for professional awareness and pedagogical skills enhancement. We have also learned that the lack of applied learning and industry alignment limits readiness of the students at Bangladeshi universities for the workforce. Addressing this, and the ‘quality education’ objective of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), requires structured policies, industry-academia collaboration, and improved training for educators. The insights resonate with efforts to enhance English language education in higher education globally, including aligning with the broader ‘quality education’ goal of the SDGs and the objectives of lifelong learning.

The Extent of RWL in Current English Language Teaching: Heavy on Theory, Light on Authentic Relevance

The survey results found a modest presence of RWL in English language education at Bangladeshi universities. The individual aspect of this educational paradigm (critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity) is slightly more noticeable at private universities, among students with an English-medium background, and those who studied English for more than three years. Apart from them, it remains underdeveloped across the board, with a lack of extensive exposure to collaborative and applied learning experiences. This finding aligns with the widespread belief that higher education curricula in Bangladesh require to include more critical thinking and inquiry-based teaching, yet structured evaluations of their effectiveness also need to be actioned (Hamid, 2011; Rahman & Pandian, 2018). Generally, English language education is expected to encourage and embed critical thinking and creativity, fostering students’ ability to engage with global issues and developing them as empathetic learners (Bekteshi & Xhaferi, 2020).

Similar to the individual aspect of RWL, the lack of strong mutuality (experiential and applied activities) and technical/professional skills highlights the missed opportunity to embed applied activities and work-based learning, which plausibly limits students’ ability to connect theoretical knowledge with real-world contexts and applications. This educational approach is essential for preparing students for the workforce. Previous research suggests that connecting English language teaching with industry scenarios and professions can enhance professional readiness (Khan & Chaudhury, 2012; Roshid & Webb, 2013). Moreover, integrating sustainability-related themes can foster broader social and professional awareness as well as can engage learners with environmental, linguistic, and cultural complexities (Hubscher-Davidson & Panichelli-Batalla, 2016).

The findings also suggest a significant relationship between student experiences linked to individuality, mutuality, and technical skills. This indicates that the presence of one element can likely influence the others. Therefore, by addressing any gaps in one area (e.g., incorporating more collaborative projects or enhancing industry partnerships) the overall RWL experience of learners in English language programs can be improved. Additionally, given the increasing global emphasis on sustainable development, English language curricula can be benefited from incorporating global perspectives as well as student-centered and transformative learning approaches (Jodoin, 2020).

Reimagining English Language Education to Bridge the Gap: Scope of Embedding Applied and External-facing Curriculum Principles

While the integration of RWL into English language education at Bangladeshi universities remains limited, the interview data reveal a lack of alignment between RWL and current language education policies. One of the major concerns is the vague process of setting the course objectives, which are often developed without rigorous research or planned needs assessments. Additionally, policymakers have historically overlooked the role of English in globalization, further complicating efforts to integrate RWL into language education (Hamid & Erling, 2016). The findings also suggest that existing English language courses do not sufficiently address labor market demands, resulting in a disconnect between educational outcomes and employment requirements mentioned by Bayes (2019). This gap results in curricula that do not adequately prepare students for professional life (Ali & Hamid, 2020). Therefore, it is vital to revisit English language education policies/guidance so that English language programs at Bangladeshi universities align with global professional expectations (Hamid & Nguyen, 2016).

RWL emphasizes the connection between educational content and its practical applications, yet this aspect is often neglected in English language program design in Bangladeshi higher education. The syllabus design tends to focus on theoretical knowledge, with limited incorporation of industry-specific vocabulary, practice, and discourse, which are essential for students' professional readiness (Pirozhkova, 2020). Moreover, the absence of stakeholders' input, for example perspectives from alumni and industry professionals, weakens the effectiveness of these programs. As a result, due to the lack of practical engagement, graduates possibly struggle with communication skills, hindering their ability to function effectively in professional settings. Without adequate preparation, many graduates face challenges in acquiring essential linguistic and cross-cultural competencies necessary for global employability. Therefore, it is useful to reconsider the traditional top-down approach to ELT course design, and highlight more on stakeholder involvement, particularly that of students and alumni. This directly relates to the emerging concept of co-creation which emphasizes collaborative curriculum development and pedagogical practice through active participation of stakeholders including learners, educators, and even external actors, such as employers (Jam et al., 2024).

The demand for globally competent professionals highlights the importance of embedding RWL principles into the English language education. Given that sustainable development requires addressing both linguistic and broader community perspectives, English language education is the suitable space in any broader curricula for incorporating interdisciplinary and real-world elements to enhance student engagement and global readiness (Bekteshi & Xhaferi, 2020; Zygmunt, 2016). The study findings suggest that enhancing students' exposure of English in practical and industry-related contexts can bridge this gap and align educational outcomes with market demands.

From the policy perspective, real-world English language teaching can position individuals as agents of success or failure. The approach can effectively address the current challenges posed by neoliberalism-driven globalization or the formation of individual identities in a prescriptive and market-driven manner (Olssen & Peters, 2007). Additionally, it has the potential to

incorporate pertinent knowledge and skills extending beyond current circumstances, a crucial aspect in higher education to align with market demands (Boud & Soler, 2015). As our study examines quality higher education through the lens of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and RWL, the findings reveal a disparity between policy-level expectations and ground realities. There is growing interest in formulating policies that reflect neoliberal ethos within the context of English language education to cultivate individuals equipped with essential communicative and linguistic resources (Ali & Hamid, 2020). However, mere policy formulation may not be sufficient unless such policies are operationalized through curriculum development, capacity building among stakeholders, bridging the gap between academia and industry, and nurturing learners in an informed manner. Furthermore, it is imperative to consider the diverse backgrounds of learners, including potential inequalities they face upon entering higher education. Identifying such disparities and implementation strategies to create equitable learning opportunities are essential for supporting learners in building their futures.

Teaching that Translates: The Power of Holistic Faculty Development in Real-world English Education

The study has identified various challenges for English language educators at Bangladeshi universities in implementing RWL-based education including English language teaching. The key barrier is the reluctance of program designers and faculty members to integrate industry needs into the curriculum. The findings suggest that, currently, academic program designers and teaching professionals seldom consult students, alumni, or labor market data while developing course materials. Direct incentives for faculty members to engage in curriculum innovation are also absent. Another key issue is the disconnect between academic instruction and real-world applicability. The faculty members often focus more on completing their syllabus than ensuring that students acquire useful applied skills. Alumni are rarely given opportunities to share professional experiences which could serve as valuable insights for shaping English language courses. The findings together indicate the feasibility of a joint approach which would combine top-down policy direction with bottom-up input from students and industry professionals (Bridgstock & Cunningham, 2016; Nguyen et al., 2019).

Another critical barrier, identified in the study, to integrating RWL-based instruction in English language education is the lack of substantial policy and financial investment. While national language policies receive rhetorical attention, they often lack the financial and structural backing necessary for meaningful implementation (Hamid & Rahman, 2019). This insufficient investment results in a system where English language educators are not adequately trained or incentivized to adopt innovative teaching approaches. Addressing this issue would require structured training program for equipping English language educators in Bangladesh's higher education with the knowledge and skills necessary for RWL-based instruction.

From the faculty development perspective, developing educators with the necessary skills and knowledge to align educational policies with external requirements, such as a thorough understanding of graduate employability demands is crucial. For this reason, faculty members should receive regular training to implement linguistic internships and work-based learning to ensure their students gain hands-on exposure of English language in real or simulated

professional settings. Another vital requirement is to foster socially responsible graduates. To achieve this, faculty members need to balance technical instruction with ethical awareness and cross-cultural understanding through RWL integration following a holistic approach (Balčiūnaitienė & Voronova, 2015).

Implications for ELT Frameworks and Pedagogies

The findings of this study show critical gaps in English Language Teaching (ELT) at Bangladeshi universities, particularly in preparing students for professional, applied, and globally relevant communicative practices. When interpreted through the lens of real-world learning (RWL), these gaps highlight the need for curriculum reform that moves beyond theoretical instruction towards contextually authentic, industry-relevant, and sustainability-oriented pedagogies. Linking with RWL's defining features (individuality, mutuality, and technical and professional skills), they show an alignment with key principles of contemporary ELT frameworks, such as English for Specific Purposes (ESP), Work-Integrated Learning (WIL), and task-based or authentic learning.

ESP emphasizes equipping learners with the specific varieties of English required for academic or professional purposes (Hyland, 2022) and designing curricula based on systematic needs analysis (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998). The reluctance of program designers and faculty to incorporate industry perspectives, along with limited consultation with students and alumni, reflects a misalignment between curriculum intentions and learners' actual professional needs, highlighting the necessity of research-informed and contextually grounded ESP curriculum design.

The study further highlights the relevance of Work-integrated Learning (WIL) in bridging the gap between classroom instruction and professional competence. WIL advocates for integrating academic learning with workplace or practice-based experiences, fostering 'learning by doing' (Elon University, 2025; Leong & Kavanagh, 2013). By embedding structured experiential activities, such as internships, simulated projects, and industry-linked assignments, English language programs can provide learners with applied practice that strengthens professional discourse, genre awareness, and transferable skills (Rampersad & Zivotic-Kukulj, 2018). The current focus on syllabus completion at the expense of applied learning highlights a missed opportunity to cultivate these competencies and underscores the importance of equipping educators with the skills and incentives to implement WIL effectively.

The findings also reveal the critical role of task authenticity in enhancing learners' communicative competence. Authentic tasks have strengths to replicate real-world communicative purposes and processes which can promote meaningful engagement, critical thinking, and problem-solving (Breen, 1985; Guariento & Morley, 2001). In ESP and English for Academic Purposes (EAP) contexts, integrated learning activities, for example disciplinary communication practices can improve learners' readiness for professional settings (Kang, 2022). The lack of mechanisms for integrating alumni input and labor market data limits the design of authentic and applied tasks.

The findings and their resonance with ELT frameworks suggest several practical steps for ELT course design and pedagogies. For example, teachers and course designers can implement

structured needs analyses involving students, alumni, and industry representatives to ensure curriculum relevance. They can embed WIL-based activities including internships, simulated projects, and professional communication tasks, to bridge theory and practice. Classroom and assessment tasks should maintain high task authenticity, reflecting real-world communicative purposes and disciplinary practices. Additionally, ongoing faculty development and capacity-building initiatives are crucial for enabling educators to design, facilitate, and assess these applied, contextually grounded learning experiences effectively.

However, it is important to consider various plausible limits of the findings, particularly about their applications in the real field. For example, this study primarily reflects the context of Bangladeshi universities which may limit generalizability of the findings to other higher education systems with different policy, cultural, or institutional structures. Similarly, the study relies on survey and interview data, which may not capture all nuances of curriculum implementation or student experiences. While the insights align with broader ELT frameworks like ESP and WIL, local factors, such as resource availability, faculty expertise, and institutional priorities may influence applicability elsewhere. Therefore, while the recommendations provide a useful model for integrating authentic and applied English learning using RWL principles, its adaptation within any contexts should consider institutional constraints, specific professional demands of the target learner population, and stakeholder engagement procedures.

CONCLUSION

The concepts, expectations and practices around the ‘quality education’ objective of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) interconnect various aspects of the wider community, economic topographies, language perspectives, and socio-cultural features. English language education at universities can address these critical areas by integrating applied pedagogies and social justice which have powers to promote transformative and lifelong learning as well as students’ ability to navigate complex professional and societal contexts.

Historically, there is a clear emphasis on critical, reflective and practice-oriented teaching and learning in global higher education. In this study, we expand these concepts and practices with a real-world learning (RWL) dimension which is applied, external facing, and future focused. In this connection, we highlight the need for linking English language education with industries and professions and constructing its policies which are feasible for the globalised world. We highlight the power of lifelong learning skills in socio-economic growth and human development and explore feasibility of using real-world English language education at universities to supply those skills. The setting for this research is English language education at Bangladeshi universities which is an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. However, similar socio-economic and educational settings may find this study relatable.

Our research shows that English language education in an EFL and developing country setting has scope of enhancing workforce readiness and can foster socially responsible and globally competent graduates for the modern world. In this regard, the consideration of various applied ELT frameworks, such as ESP, WIL, and task-based learning through the lens of real-world learning (RWL) is beneficial. The approach would help promote curriculum reform that

emphasises authentic, industry-relevant, and applied learning experiences, and better prepare students for real-world contexts and global employability.

However, any changes in the traditional ELT practices would require a paradigm shift in both curriculum design and capacity building of the faculty members. Establishing stronger industry-academic collaborations, integrating real-world insights into course development, and fostering a culture of continuing professional development among educators would be critical in bridging the gap between English language education and labour market expectations. As the economic growth and quality education are interlinked, reinforcing the importance of aligning English language education policies with external requirements is vital. It is essential to revamp curriculum and pedagogical practices to enable university-industry interactions and address any gaps in mutuality (experiential and applied activities) and technical skills. The implementation of work-based learning could provide students with hands-on exposure of the practical use of English in professional settings. To meet this expectation, partnerships between universities, industries, and professionals would be an effective approach. However, due to financial constraints and limited industry networks, many universities may not be able to provide such opportunities to students and will rely instead on classroom-based RWL content and activities.

In our study, we have also identified opportunities within the EFL English language curriculum to cultivate socially responsible graduates. Producing competent professionals alone is insufficient and, therefore, university graduates should possess ethical awareness and a sense of social responsibility. While curriculum adjustments can incorporate RWL elements, addressing students' broader societal contributions requires a more holistic approach. In this regard, balancing technical expertise with an understanding of global and local cultures and sustainability can be a pragmatic approach. A well-structured RWL-based English language education framework can not only enhance students' employability but also contribute to the development of well-rounded, socially responsible global citizens.

We acknowledge that this study was limited to the exploration of real-world learning elements in traditional English language education programs without conducting experiments on how a carefully designed real-world learning model functions in such a setting. Further research should validate these findings by implementing and testing real-world learning in an authentic academic environment, particularly when the educational settings are not resource-rich. This represents a crucial next step in advancing research and fostering a more practical discourse on real-world learning in English as a Foreign Language education.

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Appendix 1. Survey Questionnaire

Dear Participant,

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this survey.

The questionnaire contains eighteen statements about the English language courses you have attended or are currently attending at your university. Please read each statement carefully and provide your responses based on your overall experience in all English language courses. Your responses will remain completely anonymous.

By completing this questionnaire, you are giving your consent for your information to be used for research purposes.

1	What is your gender? (আপনার লিঙ্গ কি?): Male/ Female/ LGBT					
2	What type of school did you attend during higher secondary education? (উচ্চমাধ্যমিক শিক্ষার সময় আপনি কোন ধরনের বিদ্যালয়ে অংশ নিয়েছিলেন?): Bangla Medium (National Curriculum)/ English Medium (International Curriculum)/ English Version (National Curriculum)/ Madrassha					
3	Where do you study for higher education? (আপনি উচ্চশিক্ষার জন্য কোথায় পড়াশোনা করেন?): Public University/ Private University/ College under National University					
4	What is your academic discipline in the university? (বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে আপনার একাডেমিক অনুশদ কি?): Business/ Social Science/ Pure and Applied Science/ Arts and Humanities					
5	How many English language courses have you attended so far in your university? (আপনি এখনও পর্যন্ত কতটি ইংলিশ ল্যাংগুয়েজ কোর্সে অংশ নিয়েছেন?): Nil/ 1 – 3/ 4 or more					
		Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
6	English language courses help improve questioning skills. ইংলিশ ল্যাংগুয়েজ কোর্সগুলি প্রশ্ন করার দক্ষতা বৃদ্ধিতে সহায়তা করে।	5	4	3	2	1
7	There are collaborative tasks in the lessons of English language courses. ইংলিশ ল্যাংগুয়েজ কোর্সগুলির পাঠসমূহে গ্রুপ বা দলে পড়াশোনার সুযোগ আছে।	5	4	3	2	1
8	English language courses involve tasks on solving practical problems. ইংলিশ ল্যাংগুয়েজ কোর্সগুলিতে ব্যবহারিক সমস্যা সমাধান সম্পর্কিত বিষয়াদি অন্তর্ভুক্ত আছে।	5	4	3	2	1
9	English language courses do not develop business communication skills. ইংলিশ ল্যাংগুয়েজ কোর্সগুলি ব্যবসায়িক কিংবা দাপ্তরিক যোগাযোগের দক্ষতা বৃদ্ধি করে না।	5	4	3	2	1
10	English language courses help understand various career options. ইংলিশ ল্যাংগুয়েজ কোর্সগুলি বিভিন্ন ধরনের চাকুরী বা পেশা সম্পর্কে বুঝতে সহায়তা করে।	5	4	3	2	1
11	English language courses do not discuss global issues. ইংরেজি ভাষার কোর্সগুলিতে আন্তর্জাতিক বিষয়সমূহ আলোচিত হয়না।	5	4	3	2	1
12	In English language course, there are no activities to analyse issues critically. ইংলিশ ল্যাংগুয়েজ কোর্সগুলিতে তথ্য বা মতামত বিশ্লেষণ করার কোনও কার্যক্রম নেই।	5	4	3	2	1
13	English language courses improve job search and interview skills. ইংলিশ ল্যাংগুয়েজ কোর্সগুলি চাকুরী খোঁজা এবং চাকুরীর ইন্টারভিউ দেওয়ার দক্ষতা বৃদ্ধি করে।	5	4	3	2	1
14	There are topics on social issues in English language courses. ইংলিশ ল্যাংগুয়েজ কোর্সগুলিতে সামাজিক ইস্যুভিত্তিক বিষয়াদি অন্তর্ভুক্ত আছে।	5	4	3	2	1
15	English language courses involve tasks on investigating practical issues. ইংলিশ ল্যাংগুয়েজ কোর্সগুলির পাঠসমূহে প্রাত্যহিক বিষয়াদি অনুসন্ধানের সুযোগ রয়েছে।	5	4	3	2	1
16	English language courses allow me to share criticisms on various issues. ইংলিশ ল্যাংগুয়েজ কোর্সগুলি আমাকে বিভিন্ন বিষয় নিয়ে সূক্ষ্ম আলোচনা করার সুযোগ দেয়।	5	4	3	2	1
17	In English language courses, there are no opportunities to learn from mistakes. ইংলিশ ল্যাংগুয়েজ কোর্সগুলিতে ভুলত্রুটি থেকে শিক্ষা লাভ করার কোনো সুযোগ নেই।	5	4	3	2	1
18	English language courses do not involve guest lecturers from external companies or industries. ইংলিশ ল্যাংগুয়েজ কোর্সগুলিতে বাইরের সংস্থা বা প্রতিষ্ঠানের কাউকে অতিথি শিক্ষক হিসেবে আনা হয়না।	5	4	3	2	1
19	English language courses do not engage local communities in the lessons. ইংলিশ ল্যাংগুয়েজ কোর্সগুলি এর পাঠসমূহে স্থানীয় কমিউনিটি বা সম্প্রদায়কে যুক্ত করেনা।	5	4	3	2	1
20	English language courses help improve entrepreneurship skills. ইংলিশ ল্যাংগুয়েজ কোর্সগুলি ব্যবসায়িক দক্ষতা বৃদ্ধিতে সহায়তা করে।	5	4	3	2	1
21	English language courses provide opportunities to reflect on personal learning experiences. ইংলিশ ল্যাংগুয়েজ কোর্সগুলি ব্যক্তিগত শিক্ষার অভিজ্ঞতাগুলি চিন্তাভাবনা করার সুযোগ দেয়।	5	4	3	2	1
22	English language courses help me improve my digital literacy skills. ইংলিশ ল্যাংগুয়েজ কোর্সগুলি তথ্য প্রযুক্তি ব্যবহারের দক্ষতা বৃদ্ধিতে সহায়তা করেনা।	5	4	3	2	1
23	English language courses, there are opportunities to share personal views. ইংলিশ ল্যাংগুয়েজ কোর্সগুলিতে ব্যক্তিগত মতামত শেয়ার করার সুযোগ রয়েছে।	5	4	3	2	1

Appendix 2. Interview Guide

<p>Pre-interview considerations (logistics)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● For the convenience of both interviewers and interviewees, all interviews will be conducted online. ● Interviews will be recorded to facilitate accurate transcription, and a backup recording will also be maintained. ● A consent form, along with a brief overview of the interview topics, will be emailed to participants in advance.
<p>Pre-interview considerations (format and key questions)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Semi-structured interviews with key topics and open-ended questions with flexibility to probe deeper with supporting questions. i) Please share a few important features of the English language programs offered at your university. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What learning outputs do they produce in the course? ● How is the experience of your faculty members? ● What about students? How do they find the courses? ● What are the key objectives of those courses? ii) Do your students get opportunities to apply their learning of English language while studying at the university? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Can you give one or two examples? ● Are there any challenges in those activities? iii) Do the English language programs at your university help students in their life after university? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What academic areas can the students improve? ● What professional areas can they improve? iv) Are there any teaching, learning and management areas of your English language courses that you think need changing? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How are you planning to bring the changes? ● What challenges are you anticipating? ● How will you address those challenges?
<p>During-interview considerations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Keep interviews consistent across different participants. ● Cover all important questions. ● Stay focused while still allowing flexibility.
<p>Post-interview considerations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Check if the recordings are done properly. ● Store the recordings securely. Keep back-up. ● Send thank you email to the interviewees. ● Prepare a system for coding and organising the data.