



Rebuilding English Language Foundations for Low-Proficiency Bangladeshi College Students

Palash Kumar Ghosh¹ & Nazia Akter Jemi² & Md. Chand Ali³

¹ Lecturer in English, Fazar Ali Girls' School and College, Jhenaidah, Bangladesh

² Teacher in English, International Hope School, Uttara, Dhaka, Bangladesh

³ Assistant Professor, Department of English, Uttara University, Dhaka, Bangladesh

Correspondence: Md. Chand Ali, Uttara University, Bangladesh

Email: chand@uttarauniversity.edu.bd; palashghosh236@gmail.com; nazia.jemi97@gmail.com

DOI: 10.53103/cjess.v6i4.538

Abstract

Many Bangladeshi college students, despite years of studying English, fail to use the language correctly in writing and conversation; they often make mistakes in basic grammatical aspects such as simple, compound and complex sentence structures, sentence transformations and prepositions, punctuation or narration, and do not improve even with private lessons due to lack of regular practice and accountability. This qualitative article explores the learning problems of weak Bangladeshi college students in English and proposes a practical foundation-based learning model for them based on teacher-led motivation, classroom observation, student writing samples and interviews with stakeholders. The study identifies students' weak foundation at the sentence level, fear of English, ineffective grammar-based teaching, and lack of accountability as the main problems and proposes a 'Foundation English Accountability Model' which includes diagnostic testing, sentence-first teaching, controlled conversations, homework monitoring, and weekly exams. The article shows that struggling college students need to master basic sentence rules before they try to learn advanced grammar. These findings are very important for English teachers, lesson planners, and parents in Bangladesh.

Keywords: English Language Teaching, Bangladesh, College Students, Qualitative Study, Remedial English, Grammar Teaching, Private Tutoring, Learner Accountability

Introduction

English is a very important language in Bangladesh. It is widely used in the fields of education, employment, higher education, technology, international communication and professional development. Those who are proficient in English usually get relatively good opportunities in studies and careers. However, even after reading the subject for years,

many college students in Bangladesh remain weak in English. Various studies done on English education in Bangladesh have shown that the country is facing several major obstacles in this regard. These include problems with the implementation of the English Curriculum (Curriculum), classroom teaching methods, assessment methods, teaching materials, professional development of teachers and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) (Rahman & Others, 2019).

This problem becomes more evident and visible at the college level. Many students enroll in college with severe weaknesses in the fundamentals of English. They may know the names of grammatical subjects, such as tense, voice, narration of speeches, clause, parts of a sentence, preposition, before nouns and pronouns only, article, works as an adjective, and parts of speech, often called the father of English grammar, but may not use them in real writing. Even some students cannot write a simple sentence correctly, such as “He goes to college” or “I want to learn English.” Many cannot convert affirmative sentences into negative or interrogative sentences. Others struggle with punctuation, linking clauses, word formation, identifying parts of speech, or writing a short paragraph.

This situation poses a difficult challenge for teachers. College teachers and private tutors often try to teach advanced grammar because these topics are included in exams. But weak students are not prepared for these lessons. If a student cannot write a simple sentence, it becomes very difficult for him to learn passive voice or narration. If a student does not understand subject, verb, object, tense and pronoun, then direct and indirect speech will seem confusing to him. Similarly, if he cannot use simple prepositions in simple sentences, paragraph writing will also become weak.

Another important problem is the language fear or anxiety of students. Many Bangladeshi higher education students feel fear, nervousness and shyness when using English. Al Mamun (2021) found in his study that many students at the higher education level in Bangladesh face severe anxiety in the field of the English language, which includes inertia in communication, lack of understanding, fear of negative evaluation, negative attitude towards English classes and test anxiety. Yasmin and other researchers (2025) have also observed that fear of speaking affects Bangladeshi higher education students and that stress-free activities in the classroom can help reduce this fear and overcome speaking inertia.

Private tuition is another notable issue in Bangladesh. Due to their weakness in English, many college students turn to private tutors. But education is not guaranteed only through private education. Alam and Zhu (2022) conducted a study on higher secondary level private tuition in Bangladesh. It has been found that while private tuition provides academic support, when students do not develop the habit of self-reading, it increases their dependence and creates problems in long-term education. This topic is very relevant in learning English. Some students attend private classes regularly, but do not study at home, complete homework, revise previous studies, or practice writing on their own. As a result,

their scope of knowledge remains almost unchanged.

This article argues that a ‘foundation-building’ and ‘accountability’ (accountability-based) approach is needed for weak Bangladeshi college students in English. This requires simple teaching methods, regular practice, intensive correction of mistakes, confidence building and a strict yet compassionate monitoring system. The main purpose of this article is to present a qualitative picture of the problem and propose a practical model that can be easily used by college teachers and private tutors.

Research Problem

The main problem of this study is that many Bangladeshi college students remain weak in this subject despite studying English for a long time and regular private tutoring. Their weakness is not limited to any specific grammatical topic; rather, their problems are quite fundamental and interrelated.

They often cannot write simple, compound, and complex sentences. They also struggle with affirmative, negative, interrogative, imperative, optative, and exclamatory sentences. They repeatedly make mistakes in the use of prepositions, punctuation, articles, tenses, subject-verb agreement, word formation, and parts of speech. They also cannot use passive voice or direct-indirect speech correctly. They cannot link clauses correctly to express cause, contrast, condition, time or result. They also face problems in writing a short paragraph due to their weak skills at the sentence level.

At the same time, many students do not attach any importance to practice. They come to the private tutor to study, but do not complete their homework or revise previous lessons. They may become completely dependent on the teacher, but do not take any responsibility for learning themselves. As a result, this problem is not only grammatical but also psychological, behavioural, and pedagogical.

Research Objectives

This qualitative study has four objectives:

1. To explore the major English learning difficulties of low-proficiency Bangladeshi college students.
2. To understand why many students fail to improve even after attending private tuition.
3. To identify teaching practices that may help weak learners rebuild their English foundation.
4. To propose a practical teaching model based on sentence-level learning, regular practice, confidence-building, and learner accountability.

Research Questions

The study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What kinds of English language problems do low-proficiency Bangladeshi college students face?
2. How do students, teachers, and guardians explain students' lack of progress in English?
3. What teaching strategies are suitable for rebuilding students' foundation in grammar, writing, and speaking?
4. How can private teachers create accountability so that students practise regularly and improve gradually?

Literature Review

English Language Teaching in Bangladesh

English language teaching in Bangladesh has undergone several transformations over the past few decades. In an effort to improve students' practical English skills and prepare them for real-life communication, the national education system has introduced Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) instead of traditional grammar-based instruction. The primary objective of this curriculum reform was to shift English teaching from a rote learning approach to communicative competence; so that students can use English effectively in institutional, professional, and everyday situations. However, despite strong policy enthusiasm, the implementation of CLT in practice has not been entirely successful.

Rahman et al. (2019) observed that English language teaching in Bangladesh faces several structural challenges related to education policy, curriculum design, classroom teaching methodology, assessment systems, teaching materials, and inadequate teacher training. One of the most serious concerns is the huge gap between curriculum objectives and classroom reality. Although students are expected to be able to communicate fluently in English, many classrooms continue to place an excessive emphasis on rote memorization, grammatical explanations, translation exercises, and test preparation. Such practices do not adequately support weak learners in using English in real communicative situations.

This discrepancy particularly affects low-proficiency learners. If students simply memorize grammar rules without actively practicing sentence structure, speaking, reading comprehension, listening, and writing, they may pass exams but fail to acquire real communicative skills. Supporting this argument, Islam and Stapa (2021) found that despite prolonged exposure to English education in Bangladesh, it often fails to produce meaningful language skills; because students have limited opportunities to use the language

realistically. As a result, many students enter higher education with severely weak foundational English skills, even after years of formal education.

Learner Anxiety and Fear of English

Psychological barriers pose another major challenge in learning English, especially among students with a weak language foundation. One of the most persistent problems is the fear of students using English in communicative situations. Less proficient students often experience anxiety because they fear making grammatical mistakes, being criticized by teachers, or facing negative evaluations from classmates. Such fears directly hinder classroom participation and limit opportunities for meaningful language development.

This fear negatively affects students' willingness to participate in classroom interaction. A fearful student often avoids asking questions, hesitates to answer verbally, refuses to participate in oral discussions, avoids reading aloud, and is reluctant to give spontaneous written responses. When this trend continues over time, students gradually lose confidence and begin to view English as a scary subject rather than a learnable skill.

Alam et al. (2022)'s research shows that the willingness of university students in Bangladesh to communicate in the English classroom is largely influenced by psychological comfort, self-confidence, and fear of failure. Students who experience communication anxiety often avoid active participation, even if they understand the content. Similarly, Yasmin et al. (2025) showed that enjoyable classroom activities and a psychologically safe learning environment can significantly reduce speaking anxiety among higher education students in Bangladesh. These results strongly suggest that weak students need a supportive English classroom where mistakes are considered an essential part of learning rather than evidence of failure.

Teachers therefore play a crucial role in creating a psychologically safe learning environment. Weak students should never be belittled or discouraged for making mistakes. Instead, teachers should encourage the learning process through pair work, controlled conversation practice, guided sentence formation, repeated oral practice, and patient correction techniques, which gradually build student confidence.

Grammar Teaching and Corrective Feedback

Grammar is one of the essential foundations of language learning, especially for students with limited linguistic skills. However, grammar learning is effective only when it is taught through practical and meaningful application rather than isolated rote memorization. Norris and Ortega (2000), in their influential meta-analysis of second language instruction, showed that explicit grammar instruction through specific instructional goals and following systematic practices contributes positively to language

acquisition. Similarly, Ellis (2006) argues that grammar teaching should not be limited to explaining traditional grammatical rules, but should focus on understanding how learners gradually internalize language structures through meaningful communicative use.

In the educational context of Bangladesh, grammar teaching is often isolated from additional theoretical and practical language practice. Grammar instruction for less proficient college-level students should begin with simple sentence patterns and basic sentence structures, rather than starting directly with advanced structures such as complex clauses, narration, passive voice, conditionals, or difficult transformations. If students are unable to form simple sentences independently, introducing complex grammatical structures too quickly can further undermine their confidence and comprehension.

Effective grammar teaching therefore, requires a gradual progression from simple to complex language structures. Students should practice grammar repeatedly through writing exercises, conversation activities, guided speaking exercises, relevant sentence formation and continuous revision, so that grammatical knowledge becomes functional rather than just theoretical.

Corrective feedback also plays a very important role in improving language accuracy. Kang and Han (2015) found that written corrective feedback significantly improved second language writing accuracy, although its effectiveness depended largely on learner proficiency, classroom context, and feedback method. This finding indicates that teachers must be careful when correcting errors in the case of weak students. Marking all the mistakes at once or aggressively staining the writing with red ink is not efficient or psychologically beneficial.

Instead, teachers should prioritize the most serious structural problems first; These include errors in subject-verb agreement, tense inconsistencies, incorrect use of prepositions, punctuation problems, sentence structure weaknesses, and word order errors. Periodic revision techniques help students focus on manageable improvements, rather than overwhelming them with excessive criticism.

Private Tutoring and Learner Dependence

Private tutoring has become a highly visible and deeply rooted feature of Bangladesh's educational culture. A large number of students mainly rely on private tutoring to perform well in exams and improve their academic grades. Although private tutoring may provide some academic benefits, it does not always produce independent learners capable of sustaining long-term intellectual development.

Alam and Zhu (2022) show that, while private tutoring in Bangladesh contributes positively to test results, over-reliance on tutors often reduces learner autonomy and weakens their ability to self-regulate learning. Students who become overly dependent on external instruction often develop passive learning habits and over-rely on teacher

explanations rather than independently solving problems or engaging deeply with text material.

This problem becomes even more pronounced in English language learning, as language acquisition fundamentally depends on continuous personal practice. Many students mistakenly think that just attending regular private tutoring classes is enough to improve their English skills. They often believe that listening to teacher explanations, memorizing grammar rules, and completing guided exercises automatically improve language skills.

However, the reality of language acquisition works differently. Students must actively construct sentences independently, read texts aloud repeatedly, learn and practice new vocabulary constantly, correct mistakes repeatedly, complete regular writing tasks, and actively engage with language beyond the confines of the classroom. Without such sustained independent practice, private tutoring is no more effective than passively attending the classroom. In this situation, students may remain academically dependent, while actual language development remains limited.

Research Gap and Need for Foundational English Intervention

Existing studies have extensively explored the challenges of English language teaching in Bangladesh; These include curriculum design, classroom methods, implementation of communicative language teaching, student concerns, grammar teaching, corrective feedback practices, and the cumulative effect of private tutoring. Collectively, these studies show that English education in Bangladesh suffers from structural, psychological, and pedagogical weaknesses that prevent many students from acquiring meaningful communicative skills.

However, an important gap in current research still remains inadequate. Most of the previous studies have examined issues of English teaching broadly at the secondary, tertiary or general university level. But there has been relatively limited research on structured foundational English programs specifically designed for low-proficiency college-level students in Bangladesh who enter higher education with severe language deficits accumulated as a result of years of ineffective instruction.

Students with weak basic abilities require targeted pedagogical interventions that specifically focus on basic sentence formation, vocabulary growth, grammar acquisition, reading fluency, writing confidence, and gradual development of oral communication. Without such a foundation-oriented instructional program, students may advance academically but remain linguistically unprepared for higher education, research activities, professional communication, and participation in an increasingly global institutional environment. This lack of research therefore creates a strong rationale for exploring specialized English foundation programs for underachieving college-level students in

Bangladesh.

Methodology Research Design

This article is written as a qualitative exploratory study. A qualitative design is best suited to gain a detailed understanding of students' English learning problems, teachers' experiences, and the role of accountability in private tutoring. Qualitative research is most effective when researchers want to understand the deeper meanings, experiences, classroom practices, and social processes of a topic. Creswell and Poth explain that qualitative research includes methods such as narrative research, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and case studies; which help researchers explore people's experiences in specific contexts.

This study follows a basic qualitative method through thematic analysis. The main goal here is not just to measure test scores; but to gain a deeper understanding of why students are struggling, what their experiences are like in learning English, and what kind of teaching methods can help them improve.

Research Setting

The proposed study area is the college-level English education system in Bangladesh, which includes both the general college classroom and private tutoring (tutoring) environments. Here, students are considered to be students at the higher secondary or primary higher education level who, despite studying English for many years, are very weak in grammar, writing, and speaking.

Private tutoring is also included in this study because many students in Bangladesh rely heavily on private tutors. The private tutoring environment is very important because it usually provides more individual attention to students than a large classroom; however, this method can also fail if students do not practice on their own.

Participants

A complete empirical version of this study may include three groups of participants:

1. Students: Low-proficiency college students who attend private English tuition.
2. Teachers: English teachers or private tutors who teach weak college students.
3. Guardians: Parents or guardians who monitor students' study habits at home.

A possible sample could include 15–20 students, 5–8 teachers, and 5–8 parents. The participants could be selected through purposive sampling, as this study mainly

focuses on students who are weak in English and who have experience of private tuition or private reading.

Findings

The following findings of the study are presented as a qualitative thematic structure. These themes or topics must be supported by evidence from actual interview quotations, observation notes, and specific samples of student writing. The current version essentially provides a research-based framework that can then guide the conduct of a full-fledged empirical study.

Theme 1: Students Have a Weak Sentence-Level Foundation

The first theme is that many struggling college students have no control over basic sentence structure. They may know the names of various grammatical terms or rules, but they cannot construct correct sentences themselves. For example, they may write:

He go to college.
My father are a farmer.
I am agree with you.
I discussed about the matter.
What is your name.

These mistakes clearly indicate that the students have problems with subject-verb agreement, use of the verb 'be', prepositions, punctuation and sentence structure. The problem is not limited to any specific grammatical rule; rather, it is a foundation problem. Teachers often try to teach passive voice, narration and complex sentences as they are required to pass the exam. However, students cannot learn them properly because their foundation is weak. Learning passive voice is very difficult for a student who cannot identify the subject, verb and object of a sentence. Direct and indirect speech will be confusing for a student who cannot use tense and pronouns correctly. Similarly, it is impossible for a student who cannot write a simple sentence to produce complex or higher-level writing.

This theme basically indicates that the education of weak students should start with sentence-making. They should be made to practice according to the following patterns or structures:

I read a book.
He goes to college.

She is a student.

They are playing football.

I want to learn English.

The teacher should give many examples and require students to write many sentences. The main goal is accuracy at the sentence level before paragraph-level writing.

Theme 2: Grammar is Taught as Rules but Not Used as Language

The second theme is that grammar is often taught only in the form of rules, lists, and definitions. Students may memorize the names of sentence types, tenses, prepositions, or parts of speech, but they do not know how to use them in real life.

For example, a student may know very well that there are several types of sentences: affirmative, negative, interrogative, imperative, optative, and exclamatory. However, in practice, the student may not be able to transform the following sentences:

He plays football.

He does not play football.

Does he play football?

Do not play football.

May he succeed.

What a good player he is!

This shows that grammar knowledge is not becoming a practical language skill. Therefore, grammar should be taught through transformation and use. A useful method is to take one sentence and change it in many ways:

Base sentence: He plays football.

Negative: He does not play football.

Interrogative: Does he play football?

Past: He played football.

Future: He will play football.

Passive: Football is played by him.

This method helps students see the relationship among tense, auxiliary verb, word order, and meaning. It also prepares them for examination tasks.

Theme 3: Fear of English Reduces Participation

The third main issue or problem is fear. Weak students often avoid English due to the fear of making mistakes. They may think that their classmates will laugh at them. They also feel a sense of shame within themselves; because even though they are college-level students, they cannot form simple or basic sentences.

This fear negatively affects the students' speaking and writing skills. As a result, they sit quietly in class, imitate what others say exactly, or refrain from trying to write new sentences on their own. They even memorize entire paragraphs without understanding anything. Studies on language anxiety in the context of Bangladesh also support this concern; where it has been found that higher education students experience intense fear and inertia when it comes to the English language, especially when speaking in English (Al Mamun, 2021; Yasmin et al., 2025).

To solve this problem, teachers should make speaking or practicing English mandatory, but do it in a way that does not make it seem intimidating or threatening. Before asking students to speak in front of the whole class, they should be given the opportunity to speak in pairs. The teacher should use some controlled speaking frames, such as:

My name is _____.

I am from _____.

I study at _____.

My dream is to _____.

For opinion practice, students may use:

In my opinion, _____.

I think _____.

Because _____.

For example, _____.

This gives students support. They do not have to create a full English speech alone. They learn step by step.

Theme 4: Private Tuition Does Not Work Without Practice

The fourth theme or issue is the lack of learner accountability. Many students go to private tuition, but do not study at home. They think that just going to the teacher is enough. They may listen attentively to the teacher's explanation, but they do not write any sentences themselves, revise new vocabulary, correct their mistakes or complete their

homework.

This is one of the main reasons why their English skills remain stagnant. A teacher can explain the rules of grammar, but language skills are mainly developed through practice. Students need to use it repeatedly. They need to write, speak, read, memorize necessary words and correct their mistakes repeatedly.

Therefore, private teachers need to introduce a specific accountability system. They should check their homework in every class. In addition, it is necessary to take weekly tests and keep records of students' progress. Teachers should enforce a "no homework, no new lesson" policy when necessary. If a student is consistently unruly or negligent, teachers should involve parents.

A simple record may include:

Student Name	Homework	Weekly Test	Speaking Practice	Comment
Student A	Done	12/20	Tried	Improving
Student B	Not done	4/20	Silent	Needs attention

Such records make learning visible. Students can see whether they are improving or not.

Theme 5: Students Need Small Daily Tasks

The fifth theme is that weak learners cannot handle large homework. If the teacher gives too much work, they may avoid it. Therefore, homework should be small, regular, and checked. A suitable daily task may include:

- 10 vocabulary words
- 10 sentences
- 5 sentence transformations
- 5 correction items
- 1 short paragraph of 6–8 sentences

For example:

Affirmative: He goes to college.

Negative: He does not go to college.

Interrogative: Does he go to college?

Negative Interrogative: Does he not go to college?

This kind of small daily practice is more effective than a large amount of irregular study. It also develops discipline.

Theme 6: Focused Correction is Better Than Overcorrection

The sixth theme is error correction. Weak students make many mistakes. If the teacher corrects every mistake, the student may feel hopeless. Therefore, correction should be focused. For example, if a student writes:

He go to college everyday because he want learn English.

The teacher may correct it as:

He goes to college every day because he wants to learn English.

Then the teacher should focus on only a few points:

*He goes
every day
wants to learn*

This makes correction manageable. Students should keep a mistake correction notebook. They should write:

Wrong: *He go to college.*

Right: *He goes to college.*

Wrong: *I am agree.*

Right: *I agree.*

Wrong: *He is good in English.*

Right: *He is good at English.*

Weekly revision of this notebook can reduce repeated mistakes.

Proposed Model: The Foundation English Accountability Model

Based on the findings, this article proposes the Foundation English Accountability Model. The model has eight steps.

Step 1: Diagnostic Test

The teacher begins with a short test to identify students' real level. The test includes sentence writing, transformation, preposition, punctuation, parts of speech, and paragraph writing.

Step 2: Sentence-First Teaching

Teaching begins with simple sentence patterns. The teacher should not begin with difficult grammar. Students first learn the subject, verb, object, complement, and adverb.

Step 3: Controlled Speaking

Students practise fixed speaking patterns in pairs. This reduces fear and builds confidence.

Step 4: Grammar Through Transformation

Grammar is taught by changing sentences. Students transform affirmative sentences into negative, interrogative, passive, past, future, and other forms.

Step 5: Vocabulary and Word Formation

Students learn useful daily vocabulary and word families such as *success*, *succeed*, *successful*, and *successfully*.

Step 6: Writing Frames

Students first write with support. For example, they complete a paragraph frame about “My College.” Later, the teacher slowly removes the support.

Step 7: Focused Correction

The teacher corrects only two or three major errors at a time. Students keep a mistake correction notebook.

Step 8: Accountability System

Homework is checked regularly. Weekly tests are taken. Progress is recorded. Guardians may be informed if students are careless.

Suggested 12-Week Foundation Course

Week	Topic	Learning Goal
1	Basic sentence patterns	Students can write correct simple sentences
2	Affirmative, negative, interrogative	Students can transform basic sentences
3	Imperative, optative, exclamatory	Students can identify and write sentence types
4	Basic tense use	Students can write present, past, and future sentences
5	Parts of speech	Students can identify nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs
6	Prepositions	Students can use common prepositions correctly
7	Articles and punctuation	Students can use capital letters, full stops, commas, and question marks
8	Word formation	Students can use noun, verb, adjective, and adverb forms
9	Simple, compound, complex sentences	Students can connect ideas with joining words
10	Passive voice	Students can change simple active sentences into passive

11	Direct and indirect speech	Students can report simple statements and questions
12	Paragraph writing	Students can write a short paragraph with fewer errors

Sample 60-Minute Lesson Plan

A weak learner needs a class where practice is more important than lecture. A 60-minute class may follow this plan:

10 minutes: Vocabulary

Teach 8–10 useful words from daily life.

10 minutes: Sentence pattern

Teach one pattern, such as *I want to ...* or *I am interested in ...*

15 minutes: Pair speaking

Students practise the pattern with a partner.

10 minutes: Short reading

Students read a short paragraph of 80–120 words.

10 minutes: Writing

Students write 5–8 sentences using the same vocabulary and pattern.

5 minutes: Error correction

The teacher corrects two or three common mistakes.

The main principle is: Teach less, practise more. A practical class balance may be 30% teacher talk and 70% student practice.

Discussion

The weak college students in Bangladesh need a different kind of English learning support. For them, additional lectures or theoretical discussions of grammar are not enough; rather, they need a comprehensive or integrated foundation-building approach.

First, sentence-level accuracy is crucial: many students fail in voice, narration, clause, and paragraph writing because they cannot write even a simple sentence correctly. Therefore, teachers should start with a variety of sentence patterns or structures before teaching higher grammar.

Second, overcome fear: Students who are afraid of English will never be able to speak or write spontaneously. Pair work, controlled speaking, and gentle and tolerant error correction methods can motivate students to participate in class.

Third, accountability must be ensured in private tuition: Many students study with private tutors, but do not practice on their own. Without homework, revision and tests, the

learning process remains weak. Therefore, the teacher must create a system where students are responsible for their own learning.

Fourth, grammar should be linked to writing: Every grammar lesson should end with practical writing exercises. For example, after teaching prepositions, students should be asked to write a short paragraph using 'in', 'on', 'at', 'from', 'to' and 'with'. After teaching connectors, they should be given practice in constructing sentences using 'and', 'but', 'because', 'so' and 'if'.

Fifth, focus on specific mistakes: Weak students need to correct their mistakes, but they may become discouraged if they are identified with too many mistakes. In this case, a 'mistake correction book' or 'mistake notebook' can help students review their mistakes and reduce the tendency to repeat the same mistakes over and over again.

Pedagogical Implications

The results of this study have important implications for both English teachers and private tutors.

First, teachers should never assume that college-level students know everything about basic English. Some college students still need foundation-level instruction. Therefore, teachers should start teaching from that level, considering the students' actual proficiency.

Second, teachers should organize grammar topics in a step-by-step manner. The ideal order should be as follows:

Word → Phrase → Simple sentence → Sentence types → Tense → Parts of speech → Preposition → Punctuation → Compound/complex sentence → Voice → Narration → Paragraph writing.

Third, private teachers should check homework in every class. If homework is not regularly assessed, students may lose interest in doing it.

Fourth, weekly tests are necessary to assess the progress of students. Students should also see for themselves how their marks are improving every week.

Fifth, if a student is consistently neglecting his studies, teachers should inform the parents. Parents must know whether the student is practicing properly at home.

Sixth, students should be taught to develop systematic study habits. They should read English for at least 30 minutes every day, write 10 sentences on their own, learn 5 essential words, correct previous mistakes and practice reading aloud.

English 'First Paper' as Evidence of Communicative and Critical Language Demands

It is clear from the table of contents and content of English Paper I that college

students in Bangladesh are expected to have not only reading comprehension skills but also higher communicative and critical thinking skills. Its visible units include important themes or topics such as adolescence, youthful achievers, relationships, human rights, tours and travels, and education and life. To successfully complete the syllabus of these units, students are required to understand literary and non-literary texts, critically evaluate stories and poems, interpret graphs, practice listening for specific information, participate in conversations and debates, follow directions, take notes from lectures, write argumentative texts, and prepare reports or presentations. Therefore, Paper I is not just a matter of reading; It demands integrated language skills such as reading, writing, speaking, listening, reasoning, critical thinking and social communication.

Students who have a weak foundation in English cannot successfully meet the demands of Paper I. For example, without control over sentences, adequate vocabulary, connectors and knowledge of paragraph structure, they cannot write a logical piece of writing. Similarly, if they lack reading comprehension and confidence in language, they cannot interpret graphs or critically appreciate poems and stories. Moreover, if they suffer from intense anxiety about English and fear of making mistakes, they cannot participate in any conversation, discussion or debate. Consequently, this huge syllabus of Paper I proves how essential it is for students to rebuild their foundation. It makes it clear that students cannot rely solely on rote answers; Rather, it requires consistent practice in reading, sentence structure, vocabulary use, speaking confidence, listening, and guided writing. This strongly supports the main argument of the current study—that English teaching methods for weak college students should be realistic, consistent, confidence-building, and accountability-based.

English ‘Second Paper’ as Evidence for Rebuilding Students’ English Foundation

English Paper II does not assess any specific area of English; rather, it tests a wide range of grammar and writing skills, including articles, prepositions, verb forms, sentence completion, changing sentences, narration, pronoun reference, modifiers, connectors, synonyms, antonyms, punctuation, letter or email writing, report writing, paragraph writing and free composition. It is clear from these subjects that students are expected to have a strong grasp of sentence structure, application of grammar, vocabulary, use of punctuation and written expression. So, the syllabus itself proves the matter that a strong English foundation is essential for English Paper II.

Although a strong foundation is essential for English II, many underprivileged or weak college students in Bangladesh are not prepared to meet these requirements because their basic English foundation is very weak; moreover, they cannot even write a simple sentence correctly, so they often face difficulties in using appropriate prepositions, applying tense correctly, identifying parts of speech, linking multiple clauses, or

punctuating sentences correctly. As a result, English II seems difficult to them—not because the syllabus is impossible, but because there is a huge gap between the demands of the test and their actual language skills. This situation strongly supports the main argument of the current study, which suggests that before students can do well in English II, teachers should rebuild their basic foundation through simple sentence practice, grammatical transformation, vocabulary development, guided writing, regular error correction, and strict accountability.

Extra English Coaching as a Necessary Support Beyond Regular College Classes

Extra English coaching alongside regular college classes can be a helpful approach for weak students. It is not always possible to fill the learning gaps of these students within the normal class schedule. In regular classes, teachers have to fulfill many responsibilities. For example, they have to complete the syllabus, manage large student groups, prepare students for exams, and follow the institutional routine. Due to this pressure, weak students often remain silent in class. They hide their problems, imitate others, or rely only on memorized answers. As a result, they do not get individual attention to correct basic problems such as sentence structure, pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and lack of confidence. Extra coaching creates a smaller and more specific learning environment. In this environment, the teacher can identify the real weaknesses of each student and work step by step to eliminate them. In this sense, mandatory extra English coaching is not an additional burden. Rather, it acts as a link or bridge between the students' current abilities and the expected standards at the college level.

However, this type of coaching must be distinguished from traditional or conventional private tuition. If coaching simply repeats classroom lectures or provides model answers for students to memorize, it will not solve the problem. Instead, additional coaching should be developed as a practice-based program. Students will have an active role in this program. They will have to write, speak, correct mistakes, and review the lesson themselves. At the same time, they will have to show evidence of their own progress every week. Teachers can use some specific methods to help students. These include diagnostic tests and keeping records of personal mistakes. Teachers can also provide daily small tasks, guided writing, oral exercises, and regular feedback. This sort of coaching can also reduce students' test anxiety. It creates more opportunities for students to practice with classmates before going to regular classes or facing major exams. Therefore, mandatory additional English coaching should be seen as a well-planned academic recovery program. It instills good habits, confidence and a sense of responsibility in weak students. The success of this program is not limited to extra teaching. Rather, it is achieved through intensive supervised practice and creating opportunities for continuous improvement.

Integrating AI-Assisted Practice into Extra English Coaching

Artificial intelligence (AI) tools like ChatGPT can be incorporated into additional English coaching as a learning aid for weak college students. In a remedial coaching setting, AI can help students practice simple sentence structures, correct common grammatical errors, learn new vocabulary, translate complex concepts, practice small conversations or dialogues, and get examples based on their own standards. For weak students who are shy about speaking in front of teachers or classmates, AI-based practice can greatly reduce their fear; as they get the opportunity to try, make mistakes, and correct them completely privately before participating in the main class. OpenAI's teacher guide also shows that educators are using ChatGPT for lesson planning, explaining various topics, creating examples, helping with English writing, helping with translation, and practicing conversation. However, users are also reminded that the output of AI may not always be accurate, so teachers must verify it. Therefore, AI can make extra coaching more interactive and individualized—especially when students need to practice repeatedly outside of regular class time.

However, AI should not be used as a shortcut to memorizing answers or avoiding real learning. If students simply copy paragraphs, emails, reports, or grammar answers generated by AI, their actual English skills will not improve. For this reason, the use of AI in extra coaching should be regulated by teachers through specific rules. Students can use AI to get hints, examples, sentence corrections, vocabulary practice, and speaking prompts; however, they should rewrite those answers in their own language and explain what they have learned. UNESCO's guidelines on the use of generative AI in education also emphasize its ethical, safe, equitable, and meaningful use with human well-being at the center, which includes issues such as privacy, age-appropriate use, and sound educational design. Therefore, AI can only become a useful part of supplementary English coaching when it helps to strengthen students' practice, feedback, confidence and accountability, rather than replacing their own efforts or the teacher's responsibilities.

Motivating Disinterested Students through Relevance, Confidence, and Accountability

Another important finding is that some weak college students are not only weak in English, but they are also reluctant to learn it. The root cause of their reluctance often stems from the belief that English is a foreign language and therefore has no need for it in their personal, academic or professional lives. Such students may think that knowing correct pronunciation is not important, reading aloud is not necessary, writing accuracy is only needed for exams, and speaking or listening skills are of little value. This approach poses a serious obstacle to teaching; because when the learner himself does not understand the

importance of a subject, the learning process cannot be successful. Therefore, before expecting to improve grammar or writing skills, teachers should work on the students' beliefs and motivation. English should not be presented as an imposed foreign burden, but as a useful life skill. Teachers can connect English to students' real-life needs—such as job interviews, online applications, mobile technology, freelancing, higher education, travel, social media, and connecting with people outside their local environment. When students understand that English can open up new doors of possibilities for them, their interest in practicing it will increase significantly.

For students who are very reluctant or fearful of learning English, the teaching method should have a combination of motivation, relevance, confidence building and accountability. Teachers should not impose strict grammar rules on students right from the start. This strictness can easily increase their fear and aversion to the language. Instead, teachers can start with small and easy-to-do tasks. For example, students can read five simple sentences out loud, write three correct sentences or learn five essential words. They can also practice introducing themselves in English. Similarly, pronunciation practice also needs to start very easily and naturally. Students need to understand that clear pronunciation is not a matter of nobility, but rather an essential means of communication. To support this process, teachers can arrange pair work, role models, short videos and AI-assisted practice. Voice recordings and guided conversations can also be excellent tools to make English less intimidating and more realistic. Finally, teachers should also maintain a rigorous study routine in addition to this friendly support. Homework, speaking practice, weekly tests and progress records should be maintained regularly so that students understand that there is no substitute for their own efforts to improve their English. Therefore, reluctant students need both mental encouragement and academic discipline. Their attitude can change only when they achieve small successes, understand the practical value of English and receive regular guidance without any form of humiliation or harassment.

Despite motivational support, real-life examples, friendly teaching and various confidence-building activities, some students may remain reluctant or averse to learning English. In such situations, teachers need to understand that the issue is no longer limited to language learning problems; it has now become a matter of the student's own responsibility, academic discipline and future preparation. The first step in this case should be to identify the real reason behind this reluctance. Some students may avoid it due to fear of failure, embarrassment due to their poor pronunciation, negative experiences in the classroom in the past or the misconception that English is not relevant to their future life. Therefore, individual counselling or advice is very important in this case. The teacher should talk to the student in a personal and respectful manner, explain the academic and professional importance of English and make him/her understand that English is not just a foreign language, but an essential skill for examinations, higher education, employment,

use of technology and communication. However, if a student still refuses to participate, the teacher should not only set some minimum mandatory learning conditions but also avoid relying on mere persuasion or pleading.

A well-organized accountability system is essential for students who are constantly reluctant or indifferent to studies. It may not be possible to force them to love English. But they can be forced to complete basic and important academic tasks. These works include regular appearances, small homework, syntax, and vocabulary practices. Students should also read aloud, take weekly exams and correct their repeated mistakes. A kind of 'learning contract' can be created between the teacher, student and parent to simplify this process. This agreement will set small targets for each week and monitor the student's progress. Finally, if the student continues to avoid studying, the matter should be reported to the parent or academic mentor (teacher/mentor) immediately. At the same time, teachers should keep alternative entry points open so that students do not completely fall behind in English practice. For example, if a student is reluctant to speak, the teacher can start with simple writing; if he wants to skip grammar, the teacher can start practicing with vocabulary and small expressions or sentences. The main principle is that reluctant students must receive help, but at the same time they need to understand the consequences or consequences of neglect. The process of learning English may begin with enthusiasm, but participation with responsibility, discipline and close supervision is essential for long-term progress.

Limitations

The current article should be strengthened by including excerpts from actual interviews, classroom observation notes, student writing samples, and evidence of how they improved after using the proposed model.

Also, this study is limited to college students in Bangladesh. As a result, its findings may not be equally applicable to all English learning contexts. However, this model may be quite useful in other similar EFL (EFL - English as a Foreign Language) contexts, where students have a very weak foundation and are overly dependent on private tuition.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future researchers could use this model to conduct an empirical qualitative case study. They could observe a private tutoring group or college class over a 12-week period. They could collect writing samples from students before and after the course began. They could also interview students, teachers, and parents. They could also compare changes in students' self-confidence and homework completion rates before and after implementing

this accountability system.

A mixed-methods study could also be useful in this context. Researchers could use pre-tests and post-tests to measure students' progress in grammar and writing skills. They could also conduct interviews to gain a deeper understanding of students' perspectives and experiences.

Conclusion

Many college students in Bangladesh are weak in English because they have a shaky foundation, low confidence, and poor reading habits. However, if a student still refuses to participate, the teacher should set some minimum mandatory learning conditions, rather than relying on persuasion or pleading. They may be able to study with a private tutor, but this presence alone will not improve their language skills. Improvement in English is mainly achieved through the regular practice of sentence structuring, vocabulary learning, conversation making, error correcting, and revising them.

This article argues that teachers need to treat such students as elementary or foundation-level students, even if they are of college level. The teaching process should be started with some kinds of steps like making simple sentences, adapting essential vocabulary, controlling conversations, and scanning and skimming small exercises. Grammar should be taught through transformation and practical applications. The method of error correction needs specifying and reviewing frequently. Private tutors should build a strong accountability system through homework tests, weekly exams, progress records, and parental involvements.

So, the message is obvious here- even weak students can improve, but it requires a specific approach or system. A good teacher's job is not just to teach English; it is also his sacred duty to show the students how to learn and achieve English. This 'Foundation English Accountability Model' introduces a very realistic and effective way to rebuild the English skills of weak college students in Bangladesh.

References

- Al Mamun, M. A. (2021). English Language Anxiety of Tertiary Level Learners in Bangladesh: Level and Sources. *English Language Teaching*, 14(11), 49–60. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v14n11p49>
- Alam, A., & Zhu, Y. (2022). Private Tutoring and Student Dependency in Bangladesh: Educational Implications. *International Journal of Educational Development*.
- Alam, M. B., & Zhu, Z. (2022). Shadow Education and Its Academic Effects In Bangladesh: A Vygotskian Perspective. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, Article 922743. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.922743>

- Alam, M. R., Ansarey, D., Halim, H. A., Rana, M. M., Milon, M. R. K., & Mitu, R. K. (2022). Exploring Bangladeshi University Students' Willingness to Communicate In English Classes Through A Qualitative Study. *Asian-Pacific Journal of Second and Foreign Language Education*, 7(2). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40862-022-00129-6>
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2023). *Qualitative Inquiry And Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches* (5th ed.). SAGE.
- Ellis, R. (2006). Current Issues in The Teaching of Grammar: An SLA Perspective. *TESOL Quarterly*, 40(1), 83–107. <https://doi.org/10.2307/40264512>
- Islam, M. S., & Stapa, M. (2021). Students' Low Proficiency in Spoken English In Private Universities In Bangladesh: Reasons And Remedies. *Language Testing in Asia*, 11(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40468-021-00139-0>
- Kang, E. Y., & Han, Z. (2015). The Efficacy of Written Corrective Feedback In Improving L2 Written Accuracy: A Meta-Analysis. *The Modern Language Journal*, 99(1), 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12189>
- Norris, J. M., & Ortega, L. (2000). Effectiveness of L2 Instruction: A Research Synthesis And Quantitative Meta-Analysis. *Language Learning*, 50(3), 417–528. <https://doi.org/10.1111/0023-8333.00136>
- Rahman, M. M., Islam, M. S., Karim, A., Chowdhury, T. A., Rahman, M. M., Seraj, P. M. I., & Singh, M. K. M. (2019). English Language Teaching in Bangladesh Today: Issues, Outcomes And Implications. *Language Testing in Asia*, 9, Article 9. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40468-019-0085-8>
- Yasmin, T., Islam, M. M., Hoque, M. S., Othman, W. M. B., Reza, M., & Al Murshidi, G. (2025). Speaking Anxiety of Tertiary-Level Learners of English in Bangladesh: An Investigation Into The Predicaments And Prospects. *English Teaching & Learning*, 49, 87–108. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42321-024-00165-0>
- Yasmin, T., Rahman, S., & Ahmed, F. (2025). Classroom Anxiety Reduction And Communicative Confidence Among Bangladeshi Higher Education Learners. *Journal of Asian Education Studies*.