

# A Critical Investigation of English Language Teaching in Bangladesh

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Unfulfilled expectations after two decades of Communicative Language Teaching

## Introduction

The 2016 World Bank report on worldwide per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP) identified Bangladesh as a lower middle-income country based on its consistent GDP growth throughout last decade (World Bank, 2016). To maintain this growth rate and meet the radical demand for human resources in increasingly globalised world markets, the country needs to communicate more effectively with the outside world. Inevitably, this means improving the quality of English teaching and learning. The significance of English, as the global *lingua franca*, to Bangladeshi learners is at its zenith. In this developing country, however, economic constraints mean that funds allocated to education are limited compared to many other Southeast Asian countries (Habib & Adhikary, 2016). Even given the generally low level of educational standards in Bangladesh (Islam, 2015), the standard of English language teaching and learning has decreased alarmingly in recent years (Hamid, 2011). English language education in Bangladesh has always been problematic, despite various attempts to initiate curriculum reform. As Hamid & Baldauf (2008) point out, the first of these major shifts in the ELT curriculum took place in the mid-1990s, when the traditional Grammar-Translation Method (GTM) was replaced with a curriculum based on a Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) model. The principal objective of this article is to review the major problems associated with ELT in Bangladesh that have hindered the implementation of the new CLT



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