

## History of the Department of English (1921-2021): An Academic Overview

Nevin Farida\*  
Qumrul Hasan Chowdhury\*\*  
Begum Shahnaz Sinha\*\*\*  
Ahmed Bashir\*\*\*\*  
Bijoy Lal Basu\*\*\*\*\*

### Abstract

As the Department of English, University of Dhaka celebrates its centenary in the year 2021, it is vital to look back and take stock of its achievements as well as the challenges it has faced over the years on the way to becoming a premier department for English studies and for English language education in the region. In this paper, we explore the academic history of the department using archival resources and interviews with senior academics who have not only witnessed but also played key roles in the evolution of the department. Based on the available data, we highlight the original motivations of the founders for establishing the department, the key changes in the curriculum and the forces that drove those changes, the academic and administrative structures, the major achievements of its teachers as well as its alumni, and the challenges facing the department today. Overall, the paper provides a few insights which may be useful for those involved in English studies in Bangladesh and other similar historical and social contexts.

**Keywords:** Department of English, University of Dhaka, academic history, English studies, achievements, challenges, 100 years

When the Partition of Bengal was annulled in 1911, causing significant frustration among the people in East Bengal, now Bangladesh, the idea of a university in Dhaka was conceived by the colonial administration, largely to mitigate the grievances of the local population (Ahmed, 1984; Rahim, 1981). Following a decade of political and cultural struggle, the University of Dhaka (DU) was established in 1921, reflecting the aspirations for the sociocultural, political and economic emancipation of the people in this part of the world (Ahmed, 1984). In addition to its important geopolitical lineages, the university also marked its academic distinctiveness by starting to function as a “teaching and residential University” (University of Dhaka, 1924, p. 132) instead of simply working as an examining body like the University of Calcutta (Ahmed, 1984). An emblem of hope and pride, particularly for the rising Bengali Muslims since then, the university has led from the front to promote higher education in this region, nurturing the values of

---

\* Professor, Department of English, University of Dhaka

\*\* Assistant Professor, Department of English, University of Dhaka

\*\*\* Professor, Department of English, University of Dhaka

\*\*\*\* Professor, Department of English, University of Dhaka

\*\*\*\*\* Associate Professor, Department of English, University of Dhaka

humanism, liberalism, democracy and free cultural expression. From the colonial period to the Pakistan regime, and from the birth of Bangladesh to the present day, the university has integrally shaped our struggle for freedom and dignity and has given unfaltering directions at times of crises. The university is now in its centenary year, creating a momentous opportunity for us to reflect critically on the aims and objectives and the ideals and achievements as well as the challenges and failures that shaped the evolution of the university as the premier institution of higher education in the country.

Established in 1921, the Department of English is one of the foundational departments of the university that aligns centrally with its mission and vision. It has also witnessed its historical growth very closely. With the aim to serve as a core centre of English studies in East Bengal, the department has come a long way in realizing this aspiration. It has produced graduates skilled in English with literary and liberal inclinations for generations and has played a pivotal role in the dissemination of English learning and teaching. By celebrating art and literature and by encouraging creative expression in addition to producing writers, poets, journalists and artistes, it has also played a pioneering role in shaping the literary and cultural traditions of the nation. Its contribution to the Liberation War of Bangladesh is also well-acknowledged. The department has also had an active involvement with the English education policies and practices in post-independent Bangladesh targeting national development. Today, the department has a century-old reputation for cultivating English studies and for making vital contributions to the literary, linguistic, educational and cultural formation of our nation.

Despite its contribution and its regional significance, systematic study of the history of the department, particularly its academic evolution over the years, is rare. One of our key aims in this paper is to understand its genesis amidst the political, cultural, economic and educational currents and cross-currents of the early 20th century. In addition, we aim to shed light on the major shifts and milestones in the programmes and curricula in the department with specific focus on admission, syllabus, assessment, teacher recruitment and student enrolment. The study, thus, hopes to contribute to a rethinking of the historical expectations accompanying its inception in light of the new educational, economic, cultural and technological shifts marking our time. Given that relatively little is known about the history of English studies in Bangladesh, this paper also works as a reference point for national, regional and international knowledge communities. The paper, written for the centennial celebration of DU, also pays tribute to the great teachers of the department who have made significant contributions not only to knowledge and scholarship but also to the making of the department, the university and the nation.

This article traces the academic history of the department using document analysis and individual accounts that are commonly used in research in educational history (Fitch, 2015; Owen, 2014). We analyzed various types of documents, such as, teachers' personal files, academic calendars, annual reports, examination question papers, syllabuses, books, articles and alumni magazines. We also conducted interviews with several notable alumni representing different historical periods to gather their first-hand views and experiences. These interviews, guided by individually tailored semi-structured interview schedules,

were conducted from October 2020 to December 2020 using the Zoom platform. The interviews helped us to provide a humanized account, and they were useful in verifying some of the information that we gathered from the documents. The senior academics that we interviewed for this paper were as follows:

- Professor Emeritus Dr. Serajul Islam Choudhury, University of Dhaka (BA Honours 1955; MA 1956)
- Former Professor Dr. Niaz Zaman, Department of English, University of Dhaka (MA 1962)
- Former Professor Dr. Arifa Rahman, Institute of Modern Languages, University of Dhaka (BA Honours 1964)
- Supernumerary Professor Dr. Fakrul Alam, Department of English, University of Dhaka (BA Honours 1972; MA 1973)
- Professor Tahmina Ahmed, Department of English, University of Dhaka (BA Honours 1981; MA 1982)

Informal conversations were also held with several senior teachers to gain insights into the historical details. In addition, we, the authors, represent different historical epochs of the department as its alumni. Our first-hand experiences as students and teachers of the department also inform the historical accounts that we have provided in this paper.

In the next section, we discuss the needs and significance of English studies in the region which led to the inception of the department. We then report on teachers, students, academic programmes, syllabuses, challenges and the Department's contributions. Finally, we draw a conclusion by projecting its future directions.

### **The need for English studies and the inception of the department**

English was introduced in India by the British (1757-1947) primarily to improve trade relations between linguistically different communities. However, the British administrators gradually began to colonize the Indian subconscious. In the first half of the 19th century, the British ruled India through the East India Company. Besides the Company's mission to convert the local people to Christianity, it also aimed at providing English education that they believed would "civilize" the native population (Eaglestone, 2000). Macaulay's 1835 'Minutes on Indian Education' reflects the intent to create "a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect" (para. 34). Macaulay's 'Minutes' was instrumental in introducing the Education Act in 1835 where teaching of English literature was given official patronage. English teaching at that time came to be dominated by the teaching of English literature, probably because the British administrators believed that English literature would enable learners to learn the target language and culture which would humanize the local population (Macaulay, 1835). The imperialists were actually "maintaining control of the natives under the disguise of a liberal education" (Viswanathan, 1987, p. 17). This was a cultural invasion as conceptualized by Freire's 'antidialogical action', where a one-way game is played by the oppressors with the oppressed (Farida, 2001). In Freire's (1993) words:

The invaders mould; those they invade are moulded. The invaders choose; those they invade follow that choice – or are expected to follow it. The invaders act; those they invade have only the illusion of acting, through the action of the invaders. (p. 133)

English replaced Persian, the official language of the Indian subcontinent in 1835. The transference was met with resistance, particularly from Muslims mainly because of their pride as former rulers. Hindus, on the other hand, were quick to adopt the new language of their white colonial masters and readily accepted changes in their economic, social, political and cultural condition. Muslims accepted the English language only when they realized that they were losing by keeping themselves aloof from their white colonizers. Subsequent political and social events such as the uprising of 1857, the setting up of Hindu College and Calcutta University, the Swadeshi movement, the establishment of the Indian Congress and Muslim League – all of which contributed to shaping both Bengali and Bengali Muslim consciousness.

It was in this backdrop that the department was established in 1921 to impart English education in East Bengal, predominantly through the teaching of English literature. It flourished because of political, academic, occupational and social needs. English was the language of the colonizers who wanted to expand colonial rule. The British wanted universities in India to produce English graduates who would be civil servants and educators and who could act as “good middlemen between the British and the people they were ruling over” (Professor Alam, Interview). According to Professor Choudhury, England had a rich literature which the educated Bengalis were familiar with. It was a window through which one could see the world and access other cultures and literatures. Since English was the state language, someone graduating from the Department of English could easily get employment in administrative, judicial or academic fields. Moreover, in colonial India people spoke several different languages, and English soon assumed the role of *lingua franca*. Therefore, it was not surprising that English graduates came to be valued highly and had prestige in society.

The department not only survived but also thrived after the British had left in 1947. During the Pakistan period and after Independence, it continued to grow under the able leadership of its teachers, despite many political setbacks. With changing times, the character of its student population also began to change. Additionally, with globalization and subsequent emphasis on the link between education and employment, the department’s curriculum and content underwent repeated revisions. We focus on these changes in the following sections.

### **Early teachers and teacher recruitment**

Charles Leslie Wrenn, a prominent scholar who eventually became a Professor of English at the University of Oxford, was the first Head of the Department when it started its operations in 1921. Among the lecturers were Mahmood Hasan, Prafullah Kumar Guha, Basanta Kumar Roy and Upendra Chandra Nag (Rahim, 1981). There were two honorary part-time teachers: Rai Bahadur S. N. Bhadra and Apurva K. Chanda. F.C. Turner, formerly Principal of Dhaka College, was appointed as an Honorary Lecturer (Rahim, 1981). On the whole, during the British period, there were few British teachers; the

department relied on its own graduates to teach its students (English Department Alumni Society, 1988<sup>i</sup>; Stock, 1973).

During two critical periods of the subcontinent's history, the department lost many of its teachers. After 1947 and following communal riots, there was a "general exodus of teachers from the university" (English Department Alumni Society, 1988, p. 6). A. G. Stock (1973) recounts her experience during these turbulent times:

In the English Department only one out of nine was a Muslim; of the others, four had crossed the border by Christmas and a fifth moved early the next year... We managed it somehow, everyone left who wanted to, and in 1948 we got together a good mixed team – four Hindus, three Muslims, one Indian Catholic and myself. (p. 83)

Before 1971, the department had been quite well-staffed. However, there was a paucity of teachers afterwards. Professor Alam notes that there were at least four reasons for that. First, two of the teachers, namely Jyotirmoy Guhathakurta (1920-1971) and Rashidul Hasan (1932-1971), were killed by the Pakistan army during the Liberation War. Second, scholarships for higher studies abroad were available relatively easily. Since the newly independent and war-ravaged country was receiving development aid from donor foreign countries, teachers in the department were receiving study grants and scholarships to study abroad. However, while some teachers returned to the university, others did not, creating a temporary shortage of teachers. The third reason was the movement of teachers. Syed Sajjad Husain (1920-1995) left for Rajshahi University to become its Vice-Chancellor and later for Saudi Arabia after Independence. Khan Sarwar Murshid (1924-2012) after Independence first became the Vice-Chancellor of Rajshahi University and then the Ambassador of Bangladesh to Poland. Also, some teachers like Shawkat Hussain received assistantships in North American universities and left, while others like Sadrul Amin received job offers from Algerian universities. The fourth reason was the rise in student numbers which demanded more teachers.

Faced with this crisis, the department hired a group of new teachers. A few teachers came from colleges offering post-intermediate degrees. Among them were Khandker Rezaur Rahman (1939-2012), M. Shamsuddoha (1938-1996) and Nadera Begum (1929-2013). A few teachers from the British Council and the American Centre came to teach English language courses. Amy Geraldine Stock (1902-1988), also known as A. G. Stock was invited to help, and she returned for a while in 1972. Professor Alam recounts how he was recruited on an *ad hoc* basis. He narrates his experience of joining the department:

In my MA exam, I felt I had done well. We had sat for the exam and the results were still some months away. One day Manzoor bhai [Syed Manzoorul Islam] came and said to me, 'Fakrul, do you want to join the department?'... I am talking about 1975. It was like they say in Bangla '*akasher chad hatey paoa*' [over the moon]. I said, 'I did not even dream of getting admitted to the department. How come I was being asked to be a teacher?' Manzoor bhai said, 'Go and meet SIC [Serajul Islam Choudhury]'. So, I went and met him. He took me to meet Mr Shamsul Haq, who was the acting Vice Chancellor ... Now, why was this the case? Kaiser [Kaiser Hamidul Haq] had been recruited one week before me ... We were taken in because seven or eight teachers had left before we joined. There was a huge vacuum... We were the lucky ones. Certainly, I was the lucky one. (Interview)

Before the 1990s, there were few female teachers in the department. By the 1990s, however, female teachers outnumbered their male counterparts. At present, there are twenty-three female teachers and eight male teachers in the department. It may be recalled here that Charupoma Basu, our alumnus, was recruited in 1937 as the first female teacher of the department and was the second woman to teach at DU (English Department Alumni Society, 1988). Recounting her experience as a student, Professor Zaman stated that during her time in 1961 there were no female teachers: “There was this all-male ambience.” Three female teachers, Razia Khan Amin (1936-2011), Husniara Huq (1929-2019), and Inari Hossain (1934-2019) joined in 1962. At that time, the department could hire teachers on an *ad hoc* basis. If a student did well in the Master’s examinations, he or she could be appointed by the department. The Head of the Department had that prerogative. Professor Zaman recounted her experience thus:

I remember that there was a senior student who was very good but couldn’t join. He had first class in his BA and MA, but was not taken maybe for his background. Now, it is politics, but in those days it was the power and personality of the Head of the Department. (Interview)

It may be mentioned here that the department switched to a more democratic system of administration after Independence when the position of the Head, who served in this capacity until retirement, was replaced by that of the Chairman/Chairperson who would be selected by rotation from among Professors, Associate Professors and Assistant Professors and would serve for three years.

### **Academic programmes**

Initially, the department offered both Bachelor and Master degree programmes. The duration of the BA Honours in English was three years; the MA was for a year for graduates with a BA Honours degree. There was a Preliminary MA stream of two years for BA Degree (Pass) students. The tutorial system was also introduced with the three-year BA Honours course and was considered a unique way of teaching (Professor Choudhury, Interview). Another unique feature of the BA Honours programme was the inclusion of subsidiary courses. Students had to choose two subjects. There would be three papers for each subject and a total of six papers from other departments of the Arts Faculty. Professor Choudhury noted that the subsidiary subjects also played an important role in the life of students. It gave students a broad foundation of knowledge in humanities as well as enabled students from different departments to interact with one another.

From the beginning, assessment was based on final sit-down written examinations, tutorials and a viva voce. It is interesting to note that initially BA Honours final examinations were held only at the end of the third year. The duration of examination for each course was three hours for BA Honours. For the Masters programme, the duration of examination was also for three hours which was later increased to four hours. Students had to complete their subsidiary examinations by the end of the second year. Viva voce was an integral part of the assessment that was conducted at the end of the BA Honours finals.

Many decades after the inception, the department introduced MPhil and PhD programmes. Professor Serajul Islam Choudhury took the initiative to begin these programmes in the 1977-1978 session. At present, the department offers MPhil and PhD degrees regularly.

### **The end of the traditional system and the beginning of the course system**

The three-year BA Honours programme, known as the “traditional” system, went through a number of changes. The course system was introduced in the session 1977-1978 (University of Dacca, 1978). According to Professor Ahmed, a change took place in the examination system during this time when annual examinations replaced the third year-ending final examinations. The course system was introduced during this time to keep the students “devoted to their studies throughout the academic session of the university and improve their standard of education” (Rahim, 1981, p. 120). Subsidiary courses continued to be part of the system until the 1994-1995 session when an integrated course system was introduced. Under this new system, three other subjects (Bangla Literature, Philosophy, and History) were made part of the English BA Honours programme. With this came a change in the assessment system as well. Earlier, in the subsidiary, students only had to pass the courses; no subsidiary course marks were added to the final results of the BA Honours degree. But in the “integrated” system, marks of the integrated courses were added to the BA Honours final results. The duration of the programme, however, remained three years. This system underwent further changes with the introduction of a four-year BA Honours programme in the 1997-1998 session.

### **From the integrated course system to the semester system**

The four-year BA Honours integrated course system continued for about a decade until it was replaced by the semester system in 2006. In this new system, the four-year BA Honours programme is divided into eight semesters, each consisting of a semester-ending final examination, a midterm examination and viva voce held at the end of each semester. The assessment system also changed from the class system (1st class, 2nd class, and 3rd class) to the grade system. Initially, the total marks for the BA Honours programme was 800, in 1994-1995 the marks was increased to 1500, and 1800 in the 1997-1998 session, when the four-year Honours programme was introduced. In the current semester system, the total marks have been further increased to 3000 and calculated against credits with 100 marks for each 4-credit course.

The introduction of the semester system at the beginning of the 21st century was deemed necessary to keep up with developments in higher education globally. After all, universities had been following the semester system for many years and some universities in the country had also introduced the semester system by this time. As Professor Alam rightly pointed out, “... it was inevitable ... since education now has been globalized as never before. We needed to adopt the semester system ultimately because we couldn’t be left out. We could not hold on to an antiquated system” (Interview).

The semester system as operational in the department is not without its problems and challenges. Along with its shorter programme duration, it has retained some features of the traditional course system like the tutorial system, and the provision for double

examiners. In this new system, unlike the traditional and course system, marks were allocated for class attendance which contributed to large class size. Professor Alam has suggested that because of such features, “it is not a semester system in the true sense”. In the existing system, as he pointed out, students cannot be introduced to a comprehensive syllabus as the number of classes taken in a semester is inadequate. With too many students in the class, the semester system cannot be implemented properly.

### **Enrolment of students**

Records show that in 1922, there were only 21 students in the BA Honours programme and 11 in the MA programme (English Department Alumni Society, 1987). Amongst the few students admitted into the MA Preliminary programme in 1921, was Leela Nag, the first female student to obtain a degree from DU, who had to fight her way into the university as higher authorities were reluctant to take female students although there were no legal restrictions. Article number 5 of Dacca University Act, 1920 (XVII of 1920), for example, says, “The University shall open to all persons of either sex and of whatever race, creed or class...” (Sen, 2003, p. 23). Given her extraordinary results in BA exams from Bethune College, Calcutta, P.J. Hartog, the first Vice-Chancellor, gave special permission for her admission into the two year MA programme. Leela Nag was one of two female students amongst the 877 students (University of Dacca, 1923) who got admitted in 1921. The department is privileged to have a student like her who broke the barriers fearlessly to pave the way for female students to pursue higher education in this part of the world. The other female students to get admitted during the early years were Protibhamoyi Chanda (BA 1928-29), Charupama Basu and Bonolata Bandyopadhyay of BA and MA, 1929-1930 sessions respectively (Chakraborty, 2010).

In 1952, only 12 students got enrolled in the BA class with only one female student while out of the nine students in the MA class, just two were females. In 1962, the number of students rose to approximately 40, with only five females amongst them (Professor Choudhury, Interview). Although the University of Dhaka had a policy of co-education from its inception, in the early years, male and female students never sat together in the same bench. From an interview with Professor Rahman, who got admitted to the BA programme in 1961, we learn that female students were always asked to sit in the first bench and were expected to enter the classroom with the teacher. Professor Zaman narrated how when she and a friend of hers once sat in the last bench, they were called out by their names and summoned to sit in the first bench set aside for female students. There was a steep rise in the enrolment of students in the session 1955-1956 and by 1956-1957 the English department became one of the largest departments (University of Dacca, 1957).

With the Independence of Bangladesh, the number of students in the department increased dramatically. In the 1977-1978 session, there were 100 students in the first year, of whom 80 were girls and only 20 boys (Professor Ahmed, Interview). The above figures show that the number of female students increased rapidly from the 1960s to 1970s. Among the possible reasons are the socio-cultural changes that took place with liberation. Before 1971, Bangladesh was a quite conservative place, and few women were allowed to go for higher education. Professor Zaman, for example, recounted that despite



having the potential, she was not allowed by her family to do her BA at the University of Dhaka since it was co-educational. With the country's Independence, society tended to liberalise and families allowed their girls to go outside homes and even attain higher education.

Over the decades, the number of students in the department increased gradually. Departmental records show that in the 1986-1987 session the number of students enrolled in it was 113 (57 males and 56 females). In the 1995-1996 session, the number of students admitted in the first year was 135 and in the 1997-1998 session, 140. In the 2001-2002 session, 147 students got admitted to the department. In the 2006-2007 session, when the semester system was introduced, the number of students enrolled in the department was 142 (males 92 and females 50). In the 2009-2010 session, the number of students admitted was 153 while in the 2013-2014 session, it was 112. However, in the 2014-2015 session, only 54 students (males 35, females 19) got admitted to the department due to a sudden change in the admission process. The number again increased to 153 in the 2015-2016 session after the change introduced in the previous admission test was dropped. In the 2019-2020 session, the number of students enrolled in the first year is 168, consisting of 78 males and 90 females. A department that started with only 33 students in 1921, saw the number rise to 757 in 2021 (males 394, females 363).

### **The admission test**

At present, students get enrolled in the first year undergraduate programmes of the University of Dhaka through admission tests. It may be mentioned here that the admission process of the university has undergone a number of changes and reforms since its inception. Indeed there was no admission test at all at the beginning. Students were admitted after a brief interview with the Head of the Department. The list of passing students from HSC (Higher Secondary Certificate) Examination (which was first known as the Entrance Examination and then as the Intermediate Examination) and their details used to be sent to all departmental Heads. Interested students would meet Heads of the departments they had applied to and would be admitted by him or her. In her memoir, Dr. Halima Khatun reminisces about how she had written an application seeking admission on plain paper to Mr. Turner, who was then Head of the Department and sent it to him via a relative. All she had to do was meet him before the commencement of classes and tell him where she had learnt English (Khatun, 2006).

In addition to the oral examination, written tests, largely subject to the discretion of individual departments, were conducted from the mid-1960s. Formal written admission tests of one hour duration were introduced after the Independence. Successful candidates were called for an oral test. Students got admitted based on their scores in both the written test and the oral test. From 1981-1982 session, the university began admitting students centrally through admission tests conducted by units: *Ka/A* (for Science), *Kha/B* (for Humanities and Social Science), and *Ga/C* (for Commerce—now Business Studies) but the mode of tests remained written examinations. *D/Gha* unit was added from 1983-1984 session (for students wishing to switch disciplines). As the number of candidates increased gradually, checking thousands of scripts became time-consuming and publication of results got delayed. Hence, in 1996-1997, the university replaced the

written test with MCQ (Multiple Choice Questions) to expedite the admission process and publication of results. In the 2014-2015 session, however, there was a sudden change in the admission test structure: a section on Advanced English was added for candidates aspiring for admission in the department. The result of this abrupt change was disastrous since only two students qualified from *Kha/B* unit for admission to the Department of English (Alam, 2021). Consequently, 54 students (mostly from *Gha/D* unit) were finally admitted to the department. Considering this outcome, the admission test reverted to its former structure in the following session. The latest change took place in the admission test of 2019-2020 session when a written component for English and Bangla was included along with the MCQ test. According to former University Grants Commission (UGC) Chairman, Professor Abdul Mannan, the introduction of the written component in the entrance examination would test the writing and analytical skills as well as prevent question leaks (The Daily Star, 2017). The candidates now have to obtain a certain score in both English MCQ and written parts to be eligible for admission in the department.

### **The syllabus: From past to present**

The Department began its teaching programme with the Calcutta University syllabus, but after some time the department designed its own syllabus. This has undergone several modifications over time (Professor Choudhury, Interview). Today, detailed information is not available about the early syllabuses of the department apart from some scattered information gathered from Dacca University Calendars, Annual Reports and interviews with our informants.

The records of the University of Dacca, The Calendar, Part 1 (1921-1924) published by University Press, Dacca shows that there were three courses offered for BA (Ordinary), eight for BA (Honours), three for MA (Preliminary), and five for MA (Regular) students. In addition to the main subject courses, BA (Honours) students had to select two more subjects in the first and second years as subsidiaries. At the MA level, for the examination of 1926 and later years, a number of alternative courses were offered. With the approval of the Head of the Department, students could choose either language or literature as the main focus of their study and also opt for a dissertation approved by the Committee of Courses and Studies (University of Dacca, 1924). In the 1927-1928 session, the syllabus was considerably modified, most likely under the headship of Dr. Mahmood Hasan (University of Dacca, 1928). As mentioned earlier, no information about the syllabuses of the next two decades of the department could be found.

In the 1952-1953 session, the syllabus was revised. However, according to Professor Choudhury, who got admitted in 1952, the syllabus was “inadequate” and “not very useful”. Major writers were often left out of the syllabus for minor ones. Interestingly, none of the three major modern novelists, Joseph Conrad, E.M. Forster and D.H. Lawrence were in the syllabus during the 1950s. There were no non-British authors, no American, African or postcolonial writers in the syllabus. There was no provision for a research paper in the syllabus but in the MA programme students were required to write an unseen essay for a course. The introduction of a language component consisting of English speaking skills and a paper on composition was a new addition in the 1954-1955 syllabus (University of Dacca, 1955). American literature was introduced in the late

1950s after the Second World War with the rise of the United States as a major global superpower (Professor Choudhury, Interview). In the early sixties, a new educational reform was attempted by introducing a functional English course for all students in the faculties of Arts and Science (University of Dacca, 1961).

Between 1972 and 1975, several changes were made in the department's activities mainly due to the introduction of the 1973 Dhaka University Order. Henceforth, decisions and policy making acquired a more democratic form where all departmental teachers could participate, and syllabus designing became a collective effort. A major change in the syllabus was the inclusion of a Continental Literature paper where writers like Tolstoy and Dostoevsky were included. Teachers returning with higher degrees from abroad led curriculum reform initiatives by introducing new texts and courses. Professor Alam writes how after completing his doctorate and coming back, he took the initiative to modernize the syllabus by introducing the 'Literary Criticism' paper. In the MA Preliminary syllabus there were no texts by female writers even in 1961, observed Professor Zaman. Inclusion of women writers and non-white writers took place mostly after 1975.

The MA syllabus of the 1972-1973 session included several electives, one of which had a research component where a student was expected to write a dissertation on any author from the syllabus. Unfortunately, as we came to know from our interviews, this paper was never offered in our department and no student actually got the opportunity to work on a dissertation at that time (Syllabus, Department of English, 1972-1973).

The BA (Honours) syllabuses for 1982, 1983 and 1984 remained the same; there were 16 fixed courses. From the 1985-1986 to 1987-1988 sessions, the syllabus went through some important changes. Introductory papers on the three literary genres – poetry, drama and fiction – along with a language paper were included in the First year course content. In the First year of 1989-1990 session, students had to take a course titled 'English Language and Introduction to Literature'. It was quite a heavy course with a combined language and literature component and the latter included texts from fiction, poetry and drama. This syllabus continued till the 1991-1992 session.

The department introduced two streams for the MA (Final) programme from the 1984-1985 session. Students could choose between doing an MA in Language or in Literature. The MA language programme was renamed as the MA in Applied Linguistics and ELT in 1997. The Department of English thus can be said to have pioneered language studies in Bangladesh through a full-fledged Master degree programme.

Starting in the 1997-1998 session, the English department along with all other departments in the Faculty of Arts, introduced the four-year integrated honours programme. Some major changes now took place in the department's activities. This was also the time when two Foundation Courses (English and Bangla) were introduced in all departments across the Arts Faculty. At this time, students had the option of choosing language and/or literature courses as they preferred in the Fourth year, equipping them for one of the two streams offered in the MA class. The MA syllabus of session 2001-2002 was revised substantially. There were several new elective courses introduced such

as 'Postcolonial Literature and Theory', 'Twentieth Century Women's Prose and Feminist Literary Criticism', 'Cultural Studies' and 'Translation in Theory and Practice'.

The 2006-2007 session saw the introduction of the semester system in the Arts Faculty. This was a significant turning point in the department's teaching programme. The authorities decided to bring forth this reformation to be at par with western universities and to reduce session delays, also known in Bangladesh as 'session jams'. However, running the semester system with such a large body of students posed major challenges. The syllabus was reduced due to the shorter duration of the programme. Professor Choudhury observes that the departmental syllabuses got "condensed almost like capsules". They were considerably modified under this new system though some optional courses were offered to give students more flexibility. Interdisciplinary courses like 'Language and Media', 'Language and Society', and 'Language through Literature' were introduced in the undergraduate programme. Two writing courses were introduced in the early semesters to improve the written proficiency of students. In 2010, in the Applied Linguistics and ELT programme, new courses such as 'Integrating Technology in the Language Classroom', 'English in the Diverse World Contexts' and 'Research Methodology' were introduced.

In 2016, following the guidelines of IQAC (Institutional Quality Assurance Cell) according to the mandate by the University Grants Commission and Ministry of Education the MA syllabus was further revised, specifying course objectives and learning outcomes for the first time. These changes were largely shaped by the need for outcome based, objective driven syllabus and teaching-learning in the global neoliberal world. In 2019, major revisions were undertaken for the BA Honours curriculum. Because of the increased value of communication technology in the present day world, further strengthened by the COVID-19 pandemic, a component on ICT skills has been included in the new BA (Honours) syllabus. The revised syllabus has taken an interdisciplinary turn as it now tries to accommodate other emerging fields of study such as Gender Studies, Environmental Studies, Information Technology, and Intercultural Communication. The new courses have been placed side by side with conventional English studies courses with the hope that such an inclusive syllabus will equip students with the skills needed to navigate adeptly at national and international levels.

### **Achievements and contributions**

The department has manifold contributions in fields such as academia, literature, culture, politics, administration, diplomacy, business and journalism. In this paper, however, we restrict our focus primarily to the department's academic activities and its contribution. Professor Alam maintains in his interview that the Department has been playing a vital role in the dissemination of English education by producing teachers for the primary, secondary and tertiary levels of our educational system. In his words, "We had an unparalleled influence in English teaching at all levels: school, college, and university". The department has also played a significant role in the arena of English language education in terms of policy formulation, pedagogical innovation and research excellence. Teachers of the department, for example, have authored and edited national English language textbooks and gave valuable direction to teaching and learning of

English in the country. Rubina Khan has led Bangladesh English Language Teachers Association (BELTA) for many years.

### **Seminars, conferences and publications**

The department has also historically upheld its commitment to research and scholarship by organizing conferences and seminars. From 1925 onwards, with active support from the department, 'The Dhaka University English Association' arranged a number of seminars. Departmental teachers, students as well as guest speakers from foreign universities participated in them. The sessions were devoted to paper presentations, readings, talks, discussions, and debates on literary topics. In 1964 and 1965, there was a break in these scholarly activities because of strikes and other political disturbances in the university (University of Dacca, 1965). As Professor Choudhury pointed out, the Association continued to organize seminars and other scholarly activities till 1975. There was another break after that period largely due to the assassination of Bangabandhu and the subsequent political tensions in the university (Professor Choudhury, Interview).

Over the years, the department organized a number of national and international conferences. There were speakers from England, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh in the O'Neill-Eliot conference held in 1988. Apart from one-day seminars, the department organized symposia on a biennial basis. In 1989, it organized a four-day seminar on Commonwealth Literature that stressed upon the significance of peripheral literatures rather than "central" literature. On the occasion of the bicentenary of the publication of Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, the department in order to pay tribute to this extraordinary woman's contribution "to making women visible" (p. 8), organized an international symposium on women and literature in 1992. A seminar was held in 1993 in observance of the quarter centennial of Christopher Marlowe's death where papers were presented to evaluate the playwright's life, his works and his time. The department and the Bangla Academy jointly organized a symposium in 1994 on colonial and postcolonial literature, art, architecture, history and economics. A biennial conference titled 'Rethinking English in Bangladesh' was held in 1996 that critically examined the status of English in Bangladesh. The papers presented in these symposiums culminated in the publication of illuminating books on themes and issues highly relevant to the needs of our context: *Other Englishes: Essays on Commonwealth Writing* (1991), *Infinite Variety: Women in Society and Literature* (1994), *Re-Appraising Marlowe: A Quartercentenary Symposium* (1995), *Colonial and Post-Colonial Encounters* (1999) and *Revisioning English in Bangladesh* (2001).

The department organized a seminar on August 13, 1998 at Goethe-Institut, Dhaka to pay tribute to Bertolt Brecht on his birth centenary. Another seminar was held on March 24, 1998 on Nirad C. Chaudhury. In the same month, another seminar took place on William Faulkner to celebrate the birth centenary of this American Nobel Laureate. On April 23, 1999, the department organized a festival to celebrate the life and works of William Shakespeare. Ernest Hemingway's birth centenary was celebrated in association with the Bangladesh Association for American Studies (BAAS) in July 1999. A book entitled, *Hemingway: A Centenary Tribute* (2007) was published with the papers presented in the conference. Again, in 1999 a two-day conference titled 'Between

Languages' was organized by the department which was held at the Centre for Advanced Research in Social Sciences. The department brought out a festschrift in 2002 in honour of Professor Serajul Islam Choudhury's retirement. This commemorative volume, *Politics and Culture: Essays in Honour of Serajul Islam Choudhury* had a collection of both reflective and academic essays of varied nature written by his students, colleagues and associates. An international conference titled 'International Ibsen Commemoration' was organized by the department in association with the Norwegian Embassy in Dhaka in May 2006 at the R. C. Majumdar Auditorium. A volume, *Centennial Essays on Ibsen* [2007] was later published by the department. On the occasion of fifty years of *Things Fall Apart* an international conference was held on 'African Literature in English/Africa in Literature' on October 30, 2008. In 2012, it organized an international conference titled 'Teaching and Learning English through Technology'. Two conferences, one national, titled 'Developing Student Writing' and another international titled 'Inspire to Write', were organized in June and November 2014 in collaboration with the University of Manchester under the INSPIRE-DEWS (International Network for Strategic Partnership in Research and Education-Department of English Writing Service) Project which was funded by the British Council. An international conference titled 'The Great War and English Studies' was held on the 18th and 19th of December, 2014 in commemoration of the First World War and its impact on global literature which culminated in the publication of a book, *The Great War and Our Cultural Mindscapes* (2017). In addition to these conferences, the department has regularly organized workshops and talks for the development of both students and teachers. Even during the COVID-19 pandemic, it did not stop its scholarly activities. During the lockdown, the department began professional development talks under the 'English Department Webinar Series'. As a part of the centenary celebration of DU, the department in August 2021 organized a webinar titled 'Leela Nag: Breaking the Barriers' to pay tribute to the first female graduate of this department and the university.

The department has always encouraged publications of journals and books. The department celebrated the quarter-centenary of Shakespeare by publishing a book in 1965 titled, *Homage to Shakespeare*, which focused on the theme of Shakespeare and the East (University of Dacca, 1965; Husain & Rizvi, 1968). The department pioneered the publication of a periodical, *Epsilon*, in 1965-1966 to promote creative and critical writing of students which discontinued publication after two issues (Husain & Rizvi, 1968; English Department Alumni Society, 1988). Moreover, a Bengali literary magazine called 'Orchestra' was published by the second-year honours students of the department (University of Dacca, 1970). In 1980, departmental students edited and financed a literary magazine titled *Novice* which was discontinued. It was published bilingually and included both creative and critical pieces written by both teachers and students. Another students' journal titled *Access* was launched in 1987, primarily to enable students to express critical opinions on the texts on the syllabuses as well as on those from outside the syllabus. *Access* was edited by the then current students who were assisted by the teachers. However, it was discontinued after the first issue. The departmental journal, *Spectrum*, began its journey in 1998. The journal has so far brought out 15 volumes, covering important topics in the fields of literature and language studies, playing a momentous role in English language research and scholarship in the region. Moreover,

the department has published several books for its students. *An English Anthology* was published in 1998, compiling poems, essays and short stories with annotations and critical commentaries for first-year students. *Advancing Language Skills* (1999) was written for students of Foundation Course across the Arts Faculty, the book has now been revised and retitled *Endeavour: An Introductory Language Coursebook* (2014). *Making Connections: Responding to Literature* (2004) is another book written with the aim of familiarizing students with different literary genres and sensitizing them to literature. *Writing Essays With Ease* [2016] focuses on general composition skills while *Exploring Academic Writing* (2016) tries to aid students by providing them with necessary strategies for academic writing. On the occasion of the University of Dhaka's centenary, the department with a research grant from the university and Ministry of Education took up the task of publishing a book (now in the press) documenting the various historical epochs and its manifold contributions to art, literature, culture, politics, education, administration and development. This special issue of *Spectrum* is also funded by the Centennial research grant of the university. Besides, the teachers in the department have also published extensively at national and international levels.

### **Projects**

The department has also collaborated with major regional and western universities over the years. For example, the link programme with the University of Warwick, UK (1998-2001) facilitated exchange visits of teachers, teacher development workshops and degree programmes for faculty members. The British Council funded INSPIRE-DEWS project (2013) was another important milestone for the department as it established links with the University of Manchester. The project focused on redesigning writing courses, conducting workshops and surveys, holding conferences, publication of books and providing teacher training services to teachers of other higher educational institutions. Apart from two textbooks on writing, already mentioned in the previous paragraph, another book, *Tertiary Level Writing in English in Bangladesh* (2018) comprising critical and empirical essays specifically on the teaching of writing in English within our context was published. Under this project, the department introduced a unique initiative titled 'Student Mentoring Service'. This is a 'learners mentoring learners' programme where students selected from senior batches on the basis of their CGPA offer academic support to students of junior batches.

The department sub-project 'Improvement and Innovation in English Teaching-Learning' (2010-2013) received a grant of \$120,000 (approx.) under the Higher Education Quality Enhancement Project (HEQEP) of the University Grants Commission of Bangladesh (UGC) and the World Bank. The sub-project resulted in significant infrastructural development of the department, including the establishment of a 'Self-Access Centre'.

### **Literary luminaries of the department**

Apart from its academic activities, the department also has alumni to be proud of. Buddhadeva Bose (1908-1974), Munier Choudhury (1925-1971), Shamsur Rahman (1929-2006), Syed Shamsul Haque (1935-2016) and Razia Khan Amin (1936-2011) were

all students of this department who made important contributions to the field of literature and culture. The contributions of Leela Roy née Nag and Charupama Basu, as mentioned previously, are also noteworthy.

A. G. Stock (1902-1988), an academic and Head of the department, has successfully recorded the events of her time at DU in her widely admired *Memoirs* (1973). Teachers of the department such as Khan Sarwar Murshid (1924-2012), Ahsanul Haque (1933-2016) and Serajul Islam Choudhury (1936-) played active roles in movements before and after our Liberation War. In the seventies and eighties, Serajul Islam Choudhury and Ahsanul Haque made their presence felt in the movement for the autonomy of the university. Serajul Islam Choudhury, now Professor Emeritus, was very keen to promote research in the department as is reflected in his introduction of the MPhil and PhD programmes in the department. Among his many contributions, he founded the University Book Centre in 1978 and the Centre for Advanced Research in Humanities in 1986. He has also written widely on a diverse range of socio-political and literary issues. During his chairmanship, Ahsanul Haque took three very important steps for the department: the introduction of the language stream at the Master's level, the introduction of a basic English language course for people outside the university and formation of the English Department Alumni Society (EDAS) in 1986 (English Department Alumni Society, 1988). For his contributions in the fields of education and translation, Kabir Chowdhury (1923-2011) was made National Professor. Kaiser M. Hamidul Haq, who participated in our Liberation War in 1971, is now an internationally renowned poet and translator. Imtiaz Habib (1949-2018), who taught in the department for over two decades, has been widely known as a prolific Shakespeare expert. Firdous Azim who authored *The Colonial Rise of the Novel* is a leading feminist scholar. She is also actively involved in *Naripokkho*, a women activist group in Bangladesh. In recent years, Niaz Zaman, Syed Manzoorul Islam and Fakrul Alam have made significant contributions in the fields of arts and literature. Syed Manzoorul Islam is widely recognized for his short stories and essays, and Fakrul Alam, for his academic essays and outstanding translation work. Niaz Zaman has also distinguished herself as a publisher and translator. Her leadership, particularly through *Gantha*, a platform that she created to give voice to female writers in the country, is also widely acknowledged. Khondakar Ashraf Hossain (1950-2013) also immensely contributed to the literary landscape of post-independent Bangladesh, particularly with his publication of a literary magazine, *Ekobingsho (The Twenty-First)*, first published in 1985. Teachers in the department such as Kashinath Roy (1947-2021), Kazal Krishna Banerjee, Nuzhat Amin and Rumana Siddique also made their marks in diverse areas of poetry. Tahmina Ahmed has made her mark in translating plays for productions by different theatre groups and directing students' stage performances over many years. The department has, thus, contributed significantly in shaping the literary, intellectual and cultural traditions of our nation by producing some of the finest scholars of our country over the last century.

The literary and cultural contributions of the teachers of the department over the years have been recognized with national awards:



**Independence Day (*Shadhinata Padak*) Award Recipients:**

Munier Choudhury (posthumously, 1980); Kabir Chowdhury (1997)

**Ekushey Award Recipients:**

Kabir Chowdhury (1991); Serajul Islam Choudhury (1996); Razia Khan Amin (1997); Syed Manzoorul Islam (2018)

**Bangla Academy Literary Award Recipients:**

Munier Choudhury (1962); Kabir Chowdhury (1973); Razia Khan Amin (1974); Serajul Islam Choudhury (1978); Syed Manzoorul Islam (1996); Khan Sarwar Murshid (2010); Fakrul Alam (2013); Kaiser Md. Hamidul Haq (2014); Niaz Zaman (2016)

**Challenges**

The department is faced with several challenges. In keeping with developments in other fields of education, literary, language and cultural studies are increasingly being redefined in light of the national development agenda, sustainable development goals as well as students' career goals and their needs. Developing students' proficiency in English is a top priority for the department. However, doing so is not easy. With the available classroom space, it gets difficult for the department to accommodate over 700 students. Professor Ahmed pointed out that in 1977 the class had as many as 120 students and there were no sections. As a result, "the students suffered as the classroom could not accommodate all. Students had to keep standing at the back or outside the door" (Interview). The situation has only worsened over time. The newest batch (Batch 14) has over 170 students in the first year. The department's classrooms still continue to have long wooden desks and benches arranged in rows and are yet to be equipped with the modern seating arrangements and technological amenities to ease teaching and learning.

The introduction of the semester system and the responsibility of managing examination-related work for the seven affiliated colleges have led to an increase in workload. In the yearly system, the students had to only sit for the year-ending exams whereas in the semester system, there are two semester final exams along with the midterms. Teaching, marking and preparing the results of these exams take up a lot of time. Providing individualized feedback is often aimed for but rarely accomplished. Heavy workload means that teachers have less time to conduct research. In this regard, Professor Alam makes the point that teachers need to do more research, not only for promotion but to keep faculty members in sync with state of the art knowledge in the discipline and to contribute to the progress of the university and the nation:

The system has been watered down and it allows for teachers to do nothing to add value. The department has stagnated over the years, where teachers tend to calculate the number of publications they have to produce for the sake of promotion. Also, I think that a good department depends on conferences, networking, international movement back and forth. I think our department has certainly not done enough. (Interview)

Another challenge the department faces now is to provide financial support to our students. A large majority of them come from humble backgrounds. Indeed, their struggle

to cope financially while studying has multiplied during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many do not have gadgets and are unable even to pay for data packages. Thankfully, alumni members and the department teachers have come forward and raised funds to support students in need. In addition, teachers personally offered help to students who were in distress. Still, there is much more that needs to be done. The department also has to do more to address the class divide, a point stressed by Professor Rahman in her interview: “I have seen students who do not mix well, if you are from a socially privileged background and a person who is not so privileged, he or she might not mix well, and I think that’s such a shame!” Since the department has a significant minority student population from different ethnic communities in Bangladesh, she believes that among other measures, more cultural and social activities can help integrate students into the department.

Teacher and student politics presents another challenge. The alumni members interviewed expressed their disapproval of the current state of affairs in the department and the university. Involvement in politics in the pre-independence period, as Alam (2016) observes, was driven by a commitment to the society which led to self-sacrifice and national achievements, currently politics is a means of self-promotion and attaining high-power positions. As a result, politics is generally seen as a contributing factor for the gradual decline in academic and research activities (Alam, 2016).

Resource allocation and opportunities for professional development have shrunk over the years. Funding opportunities in Humanities have shrunk all over the world with the global shift of priorities resulting in allocating more funds to science, engineering and business disciplines (Bulaitis, 2021). It appears that the department no longer has what Professor Rahman, one of our key informants, called the “privileged position” it used to enjoy during the British Period.

## **Conclusion**

In this paper, we attempted to provide an overview of the academic history of the Department of English, trying to shed light on some of the key developments which have defined its journey over the century. In doing so, we methodologically relied on surveying historical documents within our reach as well as hearing the perspectives of several key academics. Taking account of different historical shifts as well as the key social, cultural and political factors, we tried to understand how the syllabuses of the department evolved over the years, for example, from the early conservative studies of canonical English literature to the present day critical, liberal, postcolonial and interdisciplinary studies of English. Moreover, we explored the evolution of the Bachelor’s programme from a three-year traditional system to a four-year semester based integrated programme as well as the reformation of the student admission process involving selection, viva voce, written tests and MCQs has also been explored. We also focused on the student number and how a small and predominantly male cohort has grown into a large department with hundreds of students – many of them females – coming from all sections of the society. We looked into the teachers, their recruitment process and the increased inclusion of female teachers in the department. We also looked at academic provisions like tutorials which have historically played a vital role in

nurturing academic discussions between the students and the teachers of the department as well as explored the previous subsidiaries, facilitating inter-departmental dialogues and relationships. The paper also highlighted some of the academic achievements of the department including publishing academic journals or hosting conferences. Critical reflections were also made on some constraints in terms of infrastructures or resources, unsettling its desirable academic progress.

As we look forward to continuing our academic growth and making an impact, both nationally and globally, we suggest a number of strategies and activities that would help us achieve our goals. The first strategy would be through strengthening continuous professional development of the faculty members, particularly by international higher studies and meaningful research and publications. Another strategy would be to involve students more in academic and cultural activities and less in politics. From a geopolitical perspective, the department needs to retain its postcolonial critical agency by questioning the hegemony of the Global North in terms of the texts and pedagogies that it uses. In doing that, it can build networks with English studies centres located in South Asia, Africa or the Caribbean region sharing similar concerns. In addition, widening the vision in order to link the academic practices of the department to the societal, national and global challenges and needs also seems to be the demand of the time. In fact, under the growingly salient discourse of ‘academia-industry link’, the department also needs to find ways to prepare the students with the twenty-first century professional skills and seek more avenues for collaborations and exchanges with national-international corporate and professional bodies. Overall, setting visions or goals, informed by the voices of the students, teachers, alumni and community members, can also help the department in addressing the current and future challenges in a holistic, concrete and participatory manner for greater qualitative change.

On the centenary celebration of the University of Dhaka as well as the Department of English, we embarked on this project of documenting the academic history of the Department of English. This is admittedly a mammoth project demanding fuller and in-depth engagement, but space constraints and limited availability of resources in the current pandemic situation served as barriers. We also acknowledge that, despite our sincere efforts, we may have inadvertently missed out certain names, events and contributions. This academic history that we have documented here is not exhaustive; there remains avenues for further explorations. It should rather be seen as a brief account of the key events that shaped the course of action over a hundred years. Nevertheless, we believe that this historical account will serve as a major resource to understand the academic trajectory of a leading centre of English studies in the South Asian region. We also hope that the account will inspire and guide those involved or interested in English studies and English language education in the region.

### **Acknowledgements**

We sincerely thank the academics interviewed (Professor Serajul Islam Choudhury, Professor Niaz Zaman, Professor Arifa Rahman, Professor Fakrul Alam, and Professor Tahmina Ahmed) and consulted (Professor Sadrul Amin, Professor Sardar Fazlul Haque, Professor Syed Manzoorul Islam, Professor Ahmed Jamal, Professor Rebecca

Haque, Professor Delwar Hossain, and Professor Asha Islam Nayeem) for sharing their experiences as well as valuable insights. We are also grateful to the staff in the Central Library and the record section of the Office of the Registrar for providing us access to relevant archival documents. Abdul Hannan, our senior library assistant, has also helped us greatly in locating the archival information during the pandemic.

---

<sup>i</sup> A couple of draft book chapters were prepared by M. Shahiduzzaman under the guidance of Professor Ahsanul Haque during the mid-eighties which for reasons unknown never got completed.

## References

- Ahmed, S. (1984). Origins of the Dhaka University, *The Dhaka University Studies*, 40, 605-640.
- Ahmed, T., Khan, R., Farida, N., & Alam, Z. (Eds.). (2018). *Tertiary level writing in English in Bangladesh: Tools and approaches*. Dhaka: Department of English.
- Alam, F. (2001). The Dhaka University English curriculum: A decade of development?, In F. Alam, N. Zaman, & T. Ahmed (Eds.), *Revisioning English in Bangladesh* (pp.1-14). Dhaka: Dhaka University Press.
- Alam, F. (2016). Student-teacher politics and tertiary education, in I. Ahmed, & I. Iqbal (Eds.), *University of Dhaka: Making unmaking remaking* (pp. 94-112). Dhaka: Prothoma Prokashan.
- Alam, F. (2021). Re-visioning English studies in Bangladesh in the age of globalization and ELT, in F. Alam (Ed.), *Reading literature in English and English studies in Bangladesh: Postcolonial perspectives* (pp. 393-424). Dhaka: writers.ink.
- Alam, F., Ahmed, T., & Alam, Z. (Eds.) (2017). *The great war and our mindscapes: Centenary essays*. Dhaka: Department of English, University of Dhaka /writers.ink.
- Bulaitis (2021). "Minimum expectations" are no way to value the arts, humanities, and social sciences. Retrieved from <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2021/06/07/minimum-expectations-are-no-way-to-value-the-arts-humanities-and-social-sciences/>
- Chakraborty, R. L. (2010). Dhaka Biswabidyalayer prothom diker chatribrindo [Early female students of Dhaka University]. In S. M. Elahi (Ed.), *Shourobhay gourabey Dhaka Biswabidyalay: Alumni mohamilon 2009* (pp. 374-381). Dhaka: Dhaka University Alumni Association.
- Eaglestone, R. (2000). *Doing English: A guide for literature students*, Routledge: USA and Canada.
- English Department Alumni Society (1987). List of earliest graduate[s]. *Alumni News*, 1,7-9.
- English Department Alumni Society (1988). History of the Department of English. *Alumni News*, 2, 5-18.
- Farida, N. (2001). Images of doing university English through a literature-language subject in Bangladesh. (Unpublished M.Ed. thesis). Monash University, Australia.
- Fitch, K. (2015). Making history: Reflections on memory and elite interviews in public relations research. *Public Relations Inquiry*, 4(2), 131-144.
- Freire, P. (1993). *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (M. B. Ramos, Trans.). The Continuum Publishing Company: New York.
- Husain, S. S. and Rizvi, A. I. H. (1968). The University of Dacca: A review of changes and developments during the decade 1958-68. Dacca: Dacca University Brochure Committee.

- Khatun, H. (2006). Bishwabidyalayer dinguli [University Days], In H. A. Shahed (Ed.) *Shritimoi Dhaka Bishwabidyalay (Unforgettable Dhaka University)* (pp. 91-98). Dhaka University Alumni Association: Dhaka.
- Macaulay, T. B. (1835) Minute on Education, in H. Sharp (Ed.) (1920) *Selections from Educational Records, Part I (1781-1839)*. Calcutta, India: Superintendent, Government Printing, 107-117. Retrieved from [http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00generallinks/macaulay/txt\\_minut\\_e\\_education\\_1835.html](http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00generallinks/macaulay/txt_minut_e_education_1835.html)
- Owen, G. T. (2014). Qualitative methods in higher education policy analysis: Using interviews and document analysis. *The Qualitative Report*, 19(26), 1-19.
- Rahim, M. A. (1981). *The history of the University of Dacca*, University of Dacca: Dacca.
- Report of the Dacca University Committee (1912). Calcutta: The Bengal Secretariat Book Depot.
- Sen, R. (2003). Dhaka Bishwabidhyaloy er prothom chatri biplobi Leela Nag [Leela Nag, the first female revolutionary student of Dhaka University], in A. Roy (Ed.) *Leela Nag: Shotoborsher shradhanjali* [Leela Nag: A centenary tribute] (pp. 21-31). Dhaka: Shahitya Prokash.
- Stock, A. G. (2017). *Memoirs of Dhaka University (1947-1951)*. Bengal Lights Books: Dhaka. (Original work published 1973)
- The Daily Star. (2017, November 24). Written test along with MCQ. Retrieved from: <https://www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/public-university-admission-ugc-written-test-along-mcq-1495792>
- University of Dacca [Dhaka]. (1923). Annual report university of Dacca: 1922-23. Dacca [Dhaka]: University of Dacca [Dhaka].
- University of Dacca. (1924). University of Dacca: The calendar (1921-24). Dacca: University of Dacca.
- University of Dacca. (1928). Annual report university of Dacca: 1927-28. Dacca: University of Dacca.
- University of Dacca. (1955). Annual report university of Dacca: 1954-55. Dacca: University of Dacca.
- University of Dacca. (1957). Annual report university of Dacca: 1956-57. Dacca: University of Dacca.
- University of Dacca. (1961). Annual report university of Dacca: 1960-61. Dacca: University of Dacca.
- University of Dacca. (1965). Annual report university of Dacca: 1964-65. Dacca: University of Dacca.
- University of Dacca. (1970). Annual report university of Dacca: 1969-70. Dacca: University of Dacca.
- University of Dacca. (1978). Annual report university of Dacca: 1977-78. Dacca: University of Dacca.
- Viswanathan, G. (1987). The beginnings of English literary study in British India. *Oxford Literary Review* 9 (1 & 2), 2-26. Edinburgh University Press.