

**AN EVALUATION OF THE READING SKILLS OF
ENGLISH OF THE STUDENTS OF CLASS TEN IN
BENGALI MEDIUM SCHOOLS**

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April 2007**



BRAC University, Dhaka, Bangladesh

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BENGALI MEDIUM SCHOOLS

A Thesis

Submitted to the Department of English and Humanities

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by

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This paper is dedicated to my parents and Professor Firdous Azim.

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Abstract

This thesis aims at evaluating the English Reading Skills of students of class ten in two Bengali Medium schools in Dhaka. It tries to identify both the strengths and weaknesses of reading skills of English with a view to helping the students to improve their reading skills. This study helps the students to know the level of their reading skills in English. It also helps the teacher to understand the students' reading capability.

Our Bengali medium students' English proficiency is not in a satisfactory level and one of the reasons is their poor proficiency in reading. One of the key reasons for the low proficiency is that they hardly read anything besides their textbooks. The objective of the research is to examine the subjects' different reading skills like scanning, skimming, guessing, inferring, ability to derive the implied meaning, use of background knowledge, text organization, linking ideas and summarizing and the students' capability to implement these skills while reading.

The study used the students of class x of two different Bengali medium schools as subjects and a questionnaire and a reading comprehension test as research tools. The results show that the students' reading skills are not in a satisfactory level. Finally, the study gives some suggestions for the students to improve their reading skills in English.

The study has been divided into the following chapters:

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: Theoretical Developments of the evaluation of Reading skills.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

Chapter 4: Results

Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations.

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Introduction:

Reading is an important aspect of a language. It is one of the most important skills for everyone, especially for the students. In *Reading Success*, Brenda Thompson talks about the importance of reading for the students:

Reading is the first and most important skill children learn at school. If they do not learn to read well, the rest of their education will be impaired. (1979: 9)

So, it is very important for a student to develop his/her reading skills, which will help him/her to be a proficient reader in the long run. There have been significant developments in the theories of reading skills. A vast body of literature on reading skills is now available. In light of those developments, this present study tries to evaluate English reading skills of the students of class ten of Bengali Medium schools.

1.2 Importance of Reading:

Effective learning of a language for both instrumental and integrative purpose is not possible without reading. A learner needs to develop reading skills to read a wide variety of materials effectively and purposefully.

1.3 The Problem Defined:

In the context of Bangladesh, it is important to evaluate the English reading skills of the students of Bengali medium schools because English has been taught for a long time in Bengali medium schools but still a large majority of the students can not read

English effectively. They also have problems in understanding the language while reading a text. One of the major reasons may be the lack of knowledge about the reading skills. Generally speaking, Bengali medium schools do not promote reading as an important skill of a language. The English reading materials, which are used in the schools, are not interesting and teachers do not teach anything outside the textbook. They do not teach the reading skills in classrooms. For this reason, students lose their interest in the reading materials, which have a direct effect on their reading ability. For these reasons, it is needed to evaluate the English reading skills of the students of class ten in Bengali Medium schools.

It is well established that it is not possible to gain proficiency in reading without enough exposure to the reading materials. In our context, most of the students learn English as a second language from school, but fail to gain proficiency over it. So, it is important to do an evaluation of the reading skills especially of the Secondary levels in Bangla medium schools because it is an important level of education and most of our students study in Bengali medium schools. The study, therefore, is relevant to the context of the country.

1.4 Significance of the study:

The study is significant because by examining the reading skills in light of the theoretical developments in the field, it will be possible to find out the Bengali medium students' weaknesses and strengths in reading skills and the study will make suggestions to overcome the weaknesses to improve Bengali medium students' reading skills.

Identifying particular strengths and weaknesses of the students' reading skills through this evaluation will help the teachers to take decisions about the way of

teaching reading skills. This also gives teachers a brief idea about the students' reading skills.

1.5 Objectives of the study:

Evaluation measures the suitability of something for a particular purpose. The objective of this study is to evaluate the reading skills of the Bengali medium students of class ten. It helps the teachers to know about the students' strength and weakness about the reading skills.

1.6 Methodology:

The research methods employed for this study are:

- Library research to examine the theoretical developments in the reading skills.
- Students' questionnaire survey, and
- Reading comprehension test.

1.7 Limitation of the Study:

As this research was conducted to fulfill the partial academic requirement for BA (Honors) in English within a specified period of time, it was not possible for the researcher to cover a large area of the country, which would have involved a lot of money, manpower and time. Therefore, the sample size was rather small and limited to two schools. However, this small universe and sample size were examined closely and carefully to find out the common problems of reading of the students. The researcher took every step to make the study as objective and valid as possible.

1.8 Conclusion:

In this chapter, we have looked at the importance of reading and its skills in the context of Bengali medium schools. We also defined the problem in that particular

context. Significance, objective, methodology and the limitation of the study have been discussed in this chapter. In the next chapter, the recent theoretical developments in this area have been discussed.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Developments of the evaluation of Reading Skills

2.1 Introduction:

This chapter discusses the theoretical developments in reading skills with reference to different approaches to reading with a view to developing a framework to evaluate the reading skills of Bengali medium schools. There have been momentous developments in the theories and practices of reading skills. Major reading skills have been discussed in light of the available literature in the field.

2.2 Different approaches to Reading:

From Psycholinguistic point of view reading is a problem-solving behavior that actively involves the reader in the process of deriving and assigning meaning. (Papalia Anthony; 1997; 125). Diane Henry Leipzig (2001) takes this definition a bit further by including fluency and motivation with meaning. He said that Reading is a multifaceted process involving word recognition, comprehension, fluency and motivation. He added that to develop word recognition, learners need to learn phonemic factors, for example; food has three sounds /f/, /u/ and /d/ and the corresponding letters are-“f”, “u” and “d”. If a learner can get himself/herself familiarized with the sound, only then s/he can identify a word. To develop reading comprehension skill, learners need to improve their background knowledge, strategies for decoding meaning from text. Learners should develop high level of accuracy in word recognition and thereby attain proficiency in reading. To develop and maintain the motivation level to read a text, readers need to get the pleasure of reading books, view reading as a social act, to be shared with others.

Neil Anderson (2001; 75) views reading in terms of four things. They are:

- a) The text: The text is used as a reading material. To build up a reading habit, reading materials play a very crucial role. A text should be written in authentic language (real language used in real life) because it helps the reader to feel that they are reading a language which is alive. A text is the meeting place of creative minds where they ultimately blossom.
- b) The reader: The readers are most important part of the process of reading. A reader is the one who gets himself involved with a text, or read it; while reading, s/he develops fluency and applies various strategies to read effectively.
- c) Fluency: Fluency in reading is important to enjoy a text. A good command over reading is totally impossible without fluency. The fluency rate depends on the fluency of a reader to read a text. Fluent reading is the capacity of a reader to read and comprehend a text within proper time.
- d) Strategic reading: Strategic reading is the ability of a reader to apply different techniques of reading while reading a text. For meaningful reading, readers apply different kinds of strategies to comprehend the text. A teacher should talk about the strategies in class. Before discussing the strategies, a teacher should define it properly. In *Can Reading Strategies be Successfully Taught?* Winograd and Hare (1988) talk about the five elements as constituting complete teacher explanation:
 - i. What the strategy is,
 - ii. Why a strategy should be learned,
 - iii. How to use the strategy,
 - iv. When and where the strategy should be used and

- v. How to evaluate use of the strategy.

In Neil Anderson's article *Reading* he wrote that there is no single set of processing strategies that significantly contributes to success ... in second language reading tasks. (Anderson Neil; 2003). According to H. Douglas Brown, (1994; 291) for most second language learners who are already literate in a previous language, reading comprehension is primarily a matter of developing appropriate, effective comprehension skills. A reader should develop different kinds of reading skills to comprehend a text effectively. According to Simon Greenall and Michael Swan

Effective reading means being able to read accurately and efficiently, and to understand as much of the passage as you need in order to achieve your purpose. It may also be necessary to reproduce the content of the passage in some way or other, such as discussing its main ideas or writing a summary. Not everyone can read effectively even in their own language. Sometime comprehension failure may be a simple matter of not knowing the meaning of the word; but it's just as likely to be a deficiency in one or more of a number of specific reading skills. (2001; 2-3)

2.3 Reading skills:

In Brenda Thompson's *Reading Success*, she talks about reading skills. She said:

Reading is carefully explained as a package of artificial skills whereby visual information (i.e., words on the page) is 'decoded' into sound (i.e., the equivalent of speech) and thence into meaning. Success, it is

implied, is the perfect co-ordination of these learned skills. (1979:10-11)

H.Douglas Brown in *Teaching by Principles*(1994:292-296) talked about a number of reading skills: Skimming, Scanning, Semantic mapping, Guessing, Vocabulary analysis, Distinction between literal and impelled meaning, Capitalizing on discourse markers to process relationship and Schema theory or the use of background knowledge.

1. **Skimming:** To get a general idea about a text a reader uses skimming skill. It is mainly running your eyes over the whole text. Skimming gives readers the advantage of being able to predict the purpose of the passage, the main topic or message, and possibly some of the developing or supporting ideas. This gives them a “head start” as they embark on more focused reading. For example, when a person goes to buy a book, s/he mainly reads the title of the book, back cover of the book and maybe a few passage of the book. It gives the reader an idea about the book. (1994:293)

In Brenda Thompson’s *Reading Success*, he talks about skimming with reference to John M.Hughes’s *Reading and Reading Failures*. John said:

It is extremely important that primary skills are well developed before a child starts reading, in order that the habits of regular, rhythmic, horizontal eye movements can be established. (1979: 11-12)

2. **Scanning:** The ‘most valuable’ category is scanning, or quickly searching for some particular piece of information in a text. The purpose of scanning is to extract certain specific information without reading through the whole text. For academic English, scanning is absolutely essential. In vocational or

general English, scanning is important in dealing with genres like schedules, manuals, forms, etc. Scanning is used to get specific information about a text. For example: when a person wants to know about sports news from a newspaper, he usually sees the particular page where sports news is available. That means we scan for particular information. (1994: 293)

3. **Semantic mapping or Clustering:** Reader can easily be overwhelmed by a long string of ideas or events. The strategy of semantic mapping, or grouping ideas into meaningful clusters, helps the reader to provide some order to the chaos. (1994;293) Clustering is a very good activity for building students' vocabulary skills. It is mainly grouping the simpler words. For example: when the phrase "rainy day" is said by a teacher, a learner can easily remember different words which have a relation to this phrase like: mud, music, sleep, and umbrella etc. It helps a learner to learn new vocabularies. Neil Anderson (2003: 80) named it as "Cultivate vocabulary". He added that it is a very good activity for building students' vocabulary skills.

4. Guessing: With the help of this skill, a learner mainly keeps guessing the meaning of a word, the starting of the book by reading the title or predicting the ending of the book. It is like a "guessing game". Mainly at the advance level this strategy is used. In Teaching by Principles, H.Douglas Brown (1994) talks about some advantage of using guessing. These are:

- Guessing the meaning of the word,
- Guessing a grammatical relationship,
- Guessing a discourse relationship,
- Inferring implied meaning("between the lines")
- Guessing about a cultural reference,

- Guessing content messages.

For this Goodman (1970) said, "Reading involves a risk-a guessing game." (1994: 284)

5. Vocabulary analysis: knowledge of word meaning is the most important single factor in reading comprehension. Learners must be able to interpret the meaning of most of the words in a text in order to make sense of it.

Learners mainly analyses a word by looking at the prefixes, suffixes or the root words. H.Douglas Brown talks about five techniques that help a reader to analyze the vocabulary. These are:

- Looking for prefixes(co-, inter-, un-, etc)
- Looking for suffixes(-tion, -tive, -ally, etc)
- Looking for roots that are familiar.
- Looking for grammatical contexts that may single information.
- Looking at the semantic context (topic) for clues. (1994:295)

6. Distinction between literal and impelled meaning: This requires the application of sophisticated top-down processing skills. (In the top – down model, readers' use their past experience for predicting about a text and try to find out the conjecture either it is wrong or right.)The fact that not all language can be interpreted appropriately by attending to its literal, syntactic surface structure makes special demands on readers. Implied meaning usually has to be derived from processing pragmatic information. (1994:295)

7. Capitalizing on discourse markers to process relationship: There are many discourse markers in English that single relationship among ideas as expressed through phrases, clauses, and sentences. A clearer comprehension of such markers can greatly enhance learners' reading efficiency. Firstly, secondly,

again, so, so far, then, also, anyway, etc are some examples of discourse markers. (1994:296)

8. **Schema theory:** “The mental structures which store our knowledge are called schemata, and the theory of comprehension based on schemata is called schema theory.” (Deanne Spears;2000:25) The word Schema is first used by Bartlett in 1932. According to the theory, background knowledge is very important for reading. Schemata, a part of human brain stores our knowledge. Schema theory is based on the comprehension of schema. It is a combination of the readers’ previous knowledge and the writer’s idea, which he wrote in the book. Reader gets a chance to relate his own idea with the text, which increases the interest of a reader to read a book. According to Nunan (1988) “Schema theory is more effective for the second language learner.”

Simon Greenall and Michael Swan in *Effective Reading* (2001:2-4) also talked about a number of reading skills. Those are: Understanding text organization, Checking comprehension, Inferring, Linking ideas, Understanding writer’s style, Reacting to the text, Understanding multiple layers of meaning and Writing summaries. These reading skills can be used to improve a reader’s comprehension level. They are discussed here briefly:

1. **Extracting main ideas:** Sometime it is very difficult to find out the main idea from a passage or from a text because there may be blended too many relevant and irrelevant ideas. In this case, a reader should read a text for the general sense rather than for the meaning of every word.
2. **Understanding text organization:** Sometimes readers may have problems in understanding how a passage has been organized. If a reader has a clear concept

about text organization, it will be easy for his/her to get the main points of the text.

3. Checking Comprehension: Sometimes a reader needs to read a passage very closely to find the answer to a question. It helps students know what they understand or do not understand while reading a text. It also helps them use some reading skills for example: scanning, skimming etc.

4. Inferring: Inferring is the process of deducing (inferring) new information from information in the text, which a reader already knows. Sometimes authors talk about some events in an indirect manner. Readers have to find out the meaning of those. It increases readers' ability to think.

5. Linking ideas: In any passage or in an article, the main idea may be expressed in a number of different words or expressions. Sometime the ideas are not expressed in sequence organized. A skilled reader knows how to link different ideas in an organized way.

6. Understanding writer's style: An important part of getting the pleasure in reading is being able to find out the reasons of the writer's word choice or the way s/he plays with words.

7. Reacting to the text: Sometimes a passage may be interpreted according to the reader's own views on the subject being dealt with. Sometimes what a reader thinks about an issue is totally different from the author's point of view.
(2001:4)

8. Understanding multiple layers of meaning: A reader should develop the skill of understanding multiple layers of meaning. In literature, it is a very common tendency for an author to describe some things in an indirect manner.

If a reader fails to understand the double meaning of a thing, then s/he misses the pleasure of reading a novel.

9. **Summarizing:** It is the capacity of a student to write accurate summaries. It is very helpful for literature students because they have to read long texts. Some techniques of acquiring this skill are:

- Summarizing the content of each chapter,
- Making a list of the principal issues or events,
- Writing your own comments on the book and
- Making notes on the contents as you go along. (2001:2-4)

2.4 Conclusion:

The aspects discussed in the chapter offer a guideline for evaluating the reading skills in the Bengali medium students. They will be used in preparing students' questionnaire and the reading comprehension test to evaluate the reading skills of the students of Bangla medium schools.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction:

This chapter discusses the research methodologies that were used to conduct the research. The research tools (Questionnaire survey and Reading Comprehension test), their implications, sampling, administering the research and process of data analysis are discussed in this chapter.

3.2 Methods of data collection:

Questionnaire survey and Reading Comprehension test are used to evaluate the reading skills of the subjects.

3.3 Principles followed for Designing Instruments:

Questionnaire is an effective method for collecting data in a short time. This method is applied in this research for a number of reasons. The purpose of designing the questionnaire is to establish a direct link between the questions of the questionnaire and the skills tested in the reading comprehension test so that the questionnaire results and the comprehension test can be compared to do a comparative evaluation of the reading skills of the subjects. It is very easy and less time consuming to quantify and interpret the answers of the questionnaires. The data are comparatively objective and effortless to analyze.

A number of ways are there to design questionnaire. Using a rating scale is one common way. The Likert scale (Likert, 1932) is one very widely used rating scale used in empirical study. It provides 5 different options for each item on the questionnaire and asks individuals to respond to a series of statements by indicating whether they 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'are undecided', 'disagree', and 'strongly

disagree' with each statement. 'Strongly disagree' may be assigned score-5, while 'strongly agree' may get a score of 1. But Seliger and Shohamy (1989: 173) have suggested that in an attitude questionnaire the sequence of attitudes or responses should be the reverse of the sequence suggested by Likert (1932) i.e., the favorable attitudes should be reflected in higher scores. Therefore, in this present study attitudes or responses have been assigned value in the following way: strongly agree=5, agree=4, no opinion=3, disagree=2, and 'strongly disagree=1.

The second method, a reading comprehension test, is given to evaluate the students' reading proficiency because through this we can practically evaluate the reading skills of the students. Each question in the reading comprehension test examines each reading skill of the students, about which they have been asked in the questionnaire.

3.4 Implication of the methods:

For data collection, Questionnaire was used as the first research tool. Seliger and Shohamy (1989:173) talk about the benefit of using this type of research tool. They said, "Questionnaires are printed forms for data collection, which include questions or statements to which the subject is expected to respond, often anonymously".

According to Best (1977), a standard questionnaire should be clear and each of the questions should deal with the same idea. The questions should be objective also.

Kothari also talked about these aspects of a standard questionnaire.

For designing a questionnaire, there are many ways. Rating scale is a common way for designing a survey questionnaire. One of the widely used rating scales is the *Likert scale*. It gives five different options for each question and individuals have to respond

to the question whether they 'strongly agree', 'agree', have 'no opinion', 'disagree', and 'strongly disagree'.

The likert-type scale has several advantages. Mention may be made of the important ones:

- a) Likert-type scale is considered more reliable because under it respondents answer each statement included in the instrument.
- b) Likert-type scale can easily be used in respondent-centred and stimulus-centred studies i.e., through it we can study how responses differ between people and how responses differ between stimuli.
- c) Likert-type scale takes much less time to construct; it is frequently used by the students of opinion research. (Kothari 1985: 106-107)

These processes are followed to prepare the questionnaire. All the questions are designed focusing on the objective of the research; the questions are focusing on the students' reading proficiency.

For the reading comprehension test, the reading material was taken from a book and the questions were set by the researcher to cover all the major reading skills. All the questions focused on the nine reading skills, which have already been covered in the questionnaire. These reading skills are:

- Ability to use background knowledge.
- Ability to scan
- Ability to guess
- Ability to Link ideas
- Ability to drive the impelled meaning
- Ability to skim

- Ability to organize a text
- Ability to Infer
- Ability to summarize.

3.5 Description of the questionnaire survey:

In the questionnaire, there are nine statements followed by five options. Students had to give a tick mark according to their response. All the questions asked the subjects' personal reading skill. The nine statements are:

1. I can use my background knowledge to understand a text.
2. I can find out specific information from a text.
3. I can guess the meaning of an unfamiliar word from the context of the text.
4. I can read between lines.
5. If I read for the second time, I understand better than the first time.
6. I can get a general idea about the text after reading it once.
7. When I read a passage, I understand the way the paragraphs have been organized.
8. I can reach a conclusion or make a decision based on a given information in the text.
9. After I finish reading a text, I can easily summarize it.

3.6 Description of the reading comprehension test

The second type of research tool was the comprehension questions. From a book name *Exercise in Reading Comprehension* edited by E.L.Tidditts, the reading comprehension "A Narrow Escape" was taken. Nine questions followed the comprehension and all the questions were set to judge the reading skills of the subjects, which were already covered in the questionnaire survey part. The researcher

allowed half an hour to the subjects to answer the questions. Through the two types of research tools, it was possible to analyze the reading skills of students.

3.7 Validity and Reliability of the questionnaire and the reading comprehension tests:

Nunan (1992: 14) defines validity as ‘the extent to which a piece of research actually investigates what the researcher purports to investigate’. Seliger and Shohamy (1989: 188) state that ‘ validity refers to the extent to which the data collection procedure measures what it intends to measure’. Both the content and construct validity of an instrument ensures that the data collected through them are purposeful and correct.

The criterion of reliability provides information on whether the data collection procedure is consistent and accurate. (Seliger and Shohamy, 1989: 185). The following aspects were taken into consideration in designing the questionnaire and the reading comprehension test questions in order to ensure the content validity and reliability.

- ❑ Literature on research method
- ❑ Objectives of the present study
- ❑ Consultation with the supervisor of this research and the fellow students.

3.8 Sampling for the research

Borg and Gall (1989) define the sampling as ‘Selecting a given number of subjects from a definite population as representative of that population’.

To collect the data, researcher went to two Bangla medium schools and the number of the total students was 100. Samples selected for the survey are shown in the following table:

Type	Number
School students	100

Institution wise number of respondents is given below:

Institution	Students number	Class
School A	50	X
School B	50	X

3.9 Administering the Questionnaires Survey

Researcher conducted the research by herself. All the students and the school authority were very co-operative and active in filling out the questionnaire. After selecting the institutions and designing the materials, the researcher went to the schools. The first school, school A was located in Luxmibazar. As it was researcher's own school, she did not have to face any problem to convince the Headmistress. She was very helpful and asked the class teacher of class x to take the researcher to her class. At first, the researcher introduced her and distributed the questionnaire among the students. She also described some aspects of the questionnaire. Students got 10 minutes to finish it.

The School B also located at Luxmibazar, Dhaka. One of the friends of the researcher was a student of this school so he convinced the headmaster about the survey. He took us to his class which was class x. The students of this school first took part in the questionnaire survey. They also got 10 minutes to finish the survey.

3.10 Administering the Reading Comprehension test

At school A, students took part in the reading comprehension test after the questionnaire survey was over. They were very enthusiastic and co-operative. To finish the test, researcher gave them 30 minutes. It took the researcher forty minutes to administer the entire test.

Students of the second school, like the first one, filled out the questionnaire survey and then sat for the comprehension test. The Headmaster and the students showed their interest about the research and invited the researcher to present the paper in the school after finishing it. It inspired the researcher a lot. They were very friendly and enthusiastic. In that school, the researcher completed her data collection in an hour.

3.11 Process of Data analysis for the questionnaire survey

The data were collected by using the research tools and were hand tabulated and analyzed in terms of Frequency Counts and Mean Scores. Frequency Counts is used here because Seliger and Shohamy (1989: 211) said "Frequencies provide information about the data collected (responses of the subjects) through questionnaire before the results are used for analyzing the data of the whole study."

The mean is the sum of all scores of all subjects in a group divided by the number of subjects. The mean of each of the items, therefore, is the average score for each item and it is the summation of all the scores divided by the number of subjects.

3.12 Process of Data analysis for the reading comprehension test:

Researcher kept a record of the number of the right and wrong answers to the questions.

For the comprehension part, the researcher followed the following standered grading policy:

93-100=Excellent.

83-92=Good.

73-82=Fair.

60-72= Poor.

Below 60= Fail.

The comprehension test was out of 20 and the researcher converted the marks into percentage to fit them into the grading policy.

3.13 Conclusion:

The result found from the students' questionnaire and comprehension surveys have been given in the next chapter. The results have been analyzed with the help of an interpretation key.

Chapter 4: Results

4.1 Introduction:

The data obtained from students' questionnaire surveys were hand tabulated and analyzed in terms of frequency counts and means. Following a standard grading policy, the comprehension test answers were graded and analyzed here. This chapter contains and discusses the results.

4.2 Results found from Students' questionnaire survey

In students' questionnaire, they had to tick in a box which they thought was appropriate for them. Their responses were converted into mathematical figures as follows:

Strongly disagree = 1

Disagree = 2

No opinion = 3

Agree = 4

Strongly agree = 5.

The results are presented in the table below:

In each box the number on top indicates the number of scorers and the number at the bottom indicates the score after conversion into mathematical figures. The bottoms ones are calculated for means.

Table: 1

No	Statements	Skills Covered	Strongly Disagree(1)	Disagree(2)	No Opinion(3)	Agree(4)	Strongly Agree(5)
1	I can use my background knowledge to understand a text.	Use of background knowledge	0	55	15	25	5
			0	110	45	100	25
2	I can find out specific information from a text.	Scanning	25	50	11	12	2
			25	100	33	48	10
3	I can guess the meaning of an unfamiliar word from the context of the text.	Guessing	37	45	8	8	2
			37	90	24	32	10
4	I can read between lines.	Linking ideas	50	25	12	11	2
			50	50	36	44	10
5	If I read for the second time, I understand better than the 1 st time.	Ability to derive the impelled meaning	0	0	0	15	85
			0	0	0	60	425

			<i>S D</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>NO</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>SA</i>
6	I can get a general idea about the text after reading it once.	Skimming	2	42	16	32	8
			2	84	48	128	40
7	When I read a passage, I understand the way the paragraphs have been organized.	Text organization	22	60	15	3	0
			22	120	45	12	0
8	I can reach a conclusion or make a decision based on given information in the text.	Inference	10	43	23	16	8
			10	86	69	64	40
9	After I finish reading a text, I can easily summarize it.	Summarizing	16	11	50	15	8
			16	22	150	60	40

The analysis of the results of students' questionnaire survey :

The total number of students was 100.

In question no 1, (I use my background knowledge to understand the text.) not a single student ticked 'strongly disagree' and 55 students answered 'disagree' and 15

students ticked 'no opinion' and 25 students answered 'agree' and 5 students ticked 'strongly agree'. The mean score is 2.8.

In question no 2, (I can find out specific information from a text.) 25 students ticked 'strongly disagree' and 50 students answered 'disagree' and 11 students ticked 'no opinion' and 12 students answered 'agree' and 2 students ticked 'strongly agree'. The mean score is 2.16.

In question no 3, (I can guess the meaning of an unfamiliar word from the context of the text.) 37 students ticked 'strongly disagree' and 45 students answered 'disagree' and 8 students ticked 'no opinion' and 8 students answered 'agree' and 2 students ticked 'strongly agree'. The mean score is 1.93.

In question no 4, (I read between lines.) 50 students ticked 'strongly disagree' and 25 students answered 'disagree' and 12 students ticked 'no opinion' and 11 students answered 'agree' and 2 students ticked 'strongly agree'. The mean score is 1.9.

In question no 5, (If I read for the second time, I understand better than the first time.) Not a single student ticked 'strongly disagree' and no one answered 'disagree' and none of the student ticked 'no opinion' and 15 students answered 'agree' and 85 students ticked 'strongly agree'. The mean score is 4.85.

In question no 6, (I can get a general idea about the text after reading it once.) 2 students ticked 'strongly disagree' and 42 students answered 'disagree' and 16 students ticked 'no opinion' and 32 students answered 'agree' and 8 students ticked 'strongly agree'. The mean score is 3.02.

In question no 7, (When I read a passage, I understand the way the paragraphs have been organized.) 22 students ticked 'strongly disagree' and 60 students answered

'disagree' and 15 students ticked 'no opinion' and 3 students answered 'agree' and 0 students ticked 'strongly agree'. The mean score is 1.99.

In question no 8, (I can reach a conclusion or make a decision based on given information in the text.) 10 students ticked 'strongly disagree' and 43 students answered 'disagree' and 23 students ticked 'no opinion' and 16 students answered 'agree' and 8 students ticked 'strongly agree'. The mean score is 2.69.

In question no 9, (After I finished reading a text, I can easily summarize it.) 16 students ticked 'strongly disagree' and 11 students answered 'disagree' and 50 students ticked 'no opinion' and 15 students answered 'agree' and 8 students ticked 'strongly agree'. The mean score is 2.88.

4.3 Results found from the reading comprehension test

Table: 2

Questions no	Skills tested	Number of students who answer correctly	Number of students who gave wrong answer
1	Use of background knowledge	31%	69%
2	Scanning	38%	62%
3	Guessing	19%	81%
4	Linking ideas	27%	73%
5	Ability to derive the impelled meaning	31%	69%
6	Skimming	41%	59%
7	Text organization	22%	78%
8	Inference	35%	65%
9	Summarizing	85%	15%

Students have to answer 9 questions based on the given comprehension.

Question no 1-tested students' ability to use of background knowledge.69% students failed to answer it correctly and only 31% answered it correctly.

Question no 2, tested scanning skill of the students. 62% students gave the wrong answers and 38% gave the right answers.

Question no 3 tested students' ability to guess. 81% of students failed to give the correct answers and 19% answered it correctly.

Question no 4 tested students' ability to link ideas. 27% answered it correctly and 73% students could not answer correctly.

Question no 5 tested students' ability to derive the impelled meaning. 69% students' fail to give the right answers and 31% gave the right answers.

Question no6 tested students' ability to skim a text. 41% gave the right answers and 59% students' gave the wrong answers.

Question no 7 tested students' ability to understand the text organization. 22% gave the right answer and 78% students were unable to give the correct answer.

Question no 8 tested students' inferring skill. 65% students gave the wrong answers and 35% gave the right answers.

Question no 9 tested students' summarizing skill. 15% failed to answer it properly and 85% answered it properly.

The researcher converted the marks of the students into 100%.

The results are presented here in a table:

Table: 3

Number of Students	Mark out of 20	Mark out of 100
1	20	93-100
2	19	
5	18	83-92
8	17	
13	16	73-82
7	15	
11	14	60-72
19	13	
16	12	
7	11	Below 60
11	10	
Total=100		

4.4 Discussion of the Results

This part discusses the results of the students' questionnaires and comprehension questions.

Discussion of the questionnaire result:

The discussion of the results of table 1 is presented here:

******(The interpretation key used for discussion of the results is 1.00-2.25= Inefficient, 2.26-3.00= Not satisfactory, 3.01-3.75= Satisfactory, 3.76-5.00= Excellent.)

For statement no 1(I use my background knowledge to understand the text), the mean score is 2.8 which shows that students were 'inefficient' in using their background knowledge while reading a text.

For statement no 2 (I can find out specific information from a text), the mean score is 2.16 which show that students' scanning skill is 'not satisfactory'.

For statement no 3 (I can guess the meaning of an unfamiliar word from the context of the text); the mean score is 1.93, which shows that students were 'inefficient' in guessing..

For statement no 4(I read between line.) the mean score is 1.9, which shows that students were 'inefficient' in linking ideas.

For statement no 5 (If I read for the second time, I understand better than the first time.); the mean score is 4.85, which shows students' ability to derive the impelled meaning, is 'Excellent'.

For statement no 6(I can get a general idea about the text after read it once); the mean score is 3.02 which shows that students' scanning skill were 'satisfactory'.

For statement no 7(When I read a passage, I understand the way the paragraphs have been organized) the mean score is 1.99, which shows that students' text organizing skill were 'Inefficient'.

For statement no 8 (I can reach a conclusion or make a decision based on given information in the text), the mean score is 2.69,which shows that students' inference skill is 'not satisfactory'.

For statement no 9 (After I finish reading a text, I can easily summarize.) the mean score is 2.88, which shows students' summarizing skill is 'not satisfactory'.

In conclusion, it is observed that students were 'inefficient' in applying the four reading skills and they are: use of background knowledge, guessing, linking ideas

and text organization. In case of three reading skills, students' response was 'Not satisfactory' and they are: Scanning, inference and summarizing. Students' attitude is 'Satisfactory' in case of one reading skill, which is skimming. Students' ability to derive the impelled meaning is 'Excellent'.

Discussion of the reading comprehension test result:

Students' response to each individual question in the reading comprehension test is described here:

69% of students failed to use their background knowledge to answer question no 1, which shows that the majority of the students did not have the ability to use their background knowledge while reading.

62% of students failed to use scanning skill to answer question no 2, which shows that a good number of students did not have the ability to scan a text while reading.

81% students failed to use the guessing skill to answer question no 3, which shows that most of the students did not have the ability to use their guessing skill while reading.

73% students failed to use the skill of linking ideas to answer question no 4, which shows that the majority of the students did not have the ability to use this skill while reading.

69% students failed to use the skill of deriving impelled meaning to answer question no 5, which shows that the majority of the students did not have the ability to use this skill while reading.

59% students failed to use skimming skill to answer question no 6, which shows that most of the students did not have the ability to use skimming skill while reading.

78% students failed to use the text organization skill to answer question no 7, which shows that the majority of the students did not have this skill.

65% students failed to use inferring skill to answer question no 8, which shows that the majority of the students did not have the ability to use inferring skill while reading.

15% students' did not have the summarizing skills and it was tested in question no 9, which shows that the majority of the students have the summarizing skill while reading.

The overall result of the reading comprehension test is discussed here in table 4. (a modified extension of table 3)

Number of Students	Mark out of 20	Mark out of 100	Status
3	19-20	93-100	Excellent
13	17-18	83-92	Good
20	15-16	73-82	Fair
46	12-14	60-72	Poor
18	Below 12	Below 60	Fail
Total= 100			

- Only 3% students got 19-20 and according to the grading policy their status is 'Excellent' because out of 100 they got 93-100.

- Only 13% students got 17-18, according to the grading policy their status is “good”, because out of 100 they got 83-92.
- 20% students got 15-16 and according to the grading policy their status is ‘Fair’ because out of 100 they got 73-82.
- 46% students got 12-14, and according to the grading policy their status is “poor”, and because out of 100 they got 60-72.
- 18% students got below 12, and according to the grading policy their status is “Fail” because out of 100 they got below 60.

The overall results shows that the Bangla medium students reading skills are poor. In the next chapter, researcher tries to draw a conclusion in light of the results.

4.5 Comparative discussion between the results of the questionnaire and the reading comprehension test:

The first statement of the questionnaire and the question of the reading comprehension test focus on students’ skill of using background knowledge. In the questionnaire 55% said they were not able to use their background knowledge to understand a text. In the reading comprehension test, 69% could not use this skill. So, students’ ability to use their background knowledge is poor.

The second statement of the questionnaire and the question of the reading comprehension test focus on students’ scanning skill. In the questionnaire 75% said they were not able to scan when they read a text. In the reading comprehension test, 62% could not use this skill. So, students’ ability to scan is poor.

The third statement of the questionnaire and the question of the reading comprehension test focus on students’ guessing skill. In the questionnaire 82% said they were not able to guess the meaning of any unknown vocabulary during reading a

text. In the reading comprehension test, 81% could not use this skill. So, students' guessing skill is poor.

The fourth statement of the questionnaire and the question of the reading comprehension test focus on students' ability to link between ideas. In the questionnaire 75% said they were not able to link ideas when they read a text. In the reading comprehension test, 73% could not use this skill. So, students' ability to linking ideas is poor.

The fifth statement of the questionnaire and the question of the reading comprehension test focus on students' skill to derive the impelled meaning. In the questionnaire, each of them said that they had this skill but in reading comprehension test when it was tested it shows that 69% students were unable to implement this skill while reading. So, students' ability to derive the impelled meaning is poor.

The sixth statement of the questionnaire and the question of the reading comprehension focus on students' scanning skill. In the questionnaire 59% said they were not able to scan a text. In the reading comprehension test, 44% could not use this skill. So, students' scanning ability is poor.

The seventh statement of the questionnaire and the question of the reading comprehension test focus on students' ability to understand the text organization. In the questionnaire 82% said they were not able to understand it. In the reading comprehension test, 78% could not use this skill. So, students' ability to understand the text organization is poor.

The eighth statement of the questionnaire and the question of the reading comprehension test focus on students' inference skill. In the questionnaire 53% said they did not have the inferring skill. In the reading comprehension test, 65% could not use this skill. So, students' inferring ability is poor.

The last statement of the questionnaire and the question of the reading comprehension test focus on students' summarizing skill. In the questionnaire 27% said they were not able to summarize a text. In the reading comprehension test, 15% could not use this skill. So, students' summarizing skill is good.

4.6: Conclusion:

The results, as a whole, suggest that students reading skills are not in a satisfactory level. In the last and concluding chapter, students' reading skills have been discussed in light of the present chapter's discussions of the survey results and the tests.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendation

5.1 Introduction:

The chapter sums up, the findings of the research and makes some recommendations based on the findings of the practical survey of evaluating Bengali medium students' reading skills.

5.2 Conclusion:

Basing on the findings of the questionnaire survey and the test, the following statements draw conclusion about students' reading skills:

- Most of the students are unable to use their background knowledge when they read a text.
- Most of the students scanning skill is poor.
- Most of the students failed to guess or analysis vocabulary effectively.
- Most of the students cannot link ideas when they read a text.
- Most of the students' ability to derive impelled meaning is miserably low.
- Most of the students skimming skill is not up to the mark.
- Most of the students failed to understand the text organization of a text.
- Most of the students' inferring capacity is not good at all.
- Though in the questionnaire survey they said that they did not have the summarizing skill but in the test they can manage it nicely. It shows that their confidence level is poor.

5.3 Recommendations:

To improve Bangla medium students' reading skills, the researcher would like to make some suggestions both for the teachers and the students to overcome the weakness in reading. The recommendations are:

- ❑ Teachers should select reading materials in a way, which focus on all the major reading skills, if needed teachers can adapt the materials by adding up different reading activities to build students' reading skills.
- ❑ Reading among students should not be confined to reading academic materials. They should read a wide variety of reading materials like novels, magazines etc to allow them as much exposure to reading as possible.
- ❑ Students should be trained by the teacher to predict unfamiliar words through the given context. It helps them to improve their vocabulary analyzing capacity.
- ❑ Students should be made aware of the purpose of reading a text by their teacher.
- ❑ To develop scanning skill, students should avoid reading every words or line in a passage. Teachers will facilitate the students by designing question/ exercises for the students.

- ❑ For understanding the multiple layers of meaning and the writers' writing style, students should read good literary works.
- ❑ To motivate students for reading, teacher should develop authentic reading materials.
- ❑ Students should help themselves for improving their reading skills. They have to find out their weakness and try to overcome those with the help of their teachers and peers.

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Appendices

Appendix: 1

Questionnaire for the students.

Put a check (✓) mark on boxes.

1. I use my background knowledge to understand the text.

Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2. I can find out specific information from a text.

Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3. I can guess the meaning of an unfamiliar word from the context of the text.

Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

4. I read between lines.

Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

5. If I read for the second time, I understand better than the first time.

Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

6. I can get a general idea about the text after reading it once.

Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

7. When I read a passage, I understand the way the paragraphs have been organized.

Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

8. I can reach a conclusion or make a decision based on given information in the text.

Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

9. After I finish reading a text, I can easily summarize it

Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Appendix: 2
Reading Comprehension test
A Narrow Escape

It was fine and warm one afternoon, and Will decided to go for a bicycle ride in the country. He was enjoying the sunshine and the peaceful roads, and when he came to a steep hill he let his bicycle run down it much too fast. But there was a sharp bend at the bottom of the hill. When he was nearly there, a dog rushed out of a farmyard, barking and jumping up at him.

Will put his brakes on. He managed not to hit the dog, but he was going too fast to get round the bend safely. The bicycle ran across the road and hit the bank at the other side. Fortunately, no vehicle was passing, so there was no danger of a collision. As Will was picking himself up, the farmer came out. When he saw that there was no damage, he brought Will back to the farmhouse and gave him a glass of fresh milk.

Will was soon ready to go on his ride. 'All's well that ends well,' he said to the farmer when they wished each other goodbye.

Answer the questions:

1. Why did Will decide to go for a bicycle ride?
2. Why could not Will take a turn?
3. What is the meaning of 'steep' in the third line?
4. How did Will try to stop his bicycle?
5. Was Will in a very happy mood? Explain your answer.
6. Is it a very happy story or a sad one? Give reasons.
7. Why did Will say 'All's well that ends well'?
8. Did the weather have any effect on Will's mood?
9. Can you summarize the story in three lines?

Good Luck!!!

Tabulation of Students' Questionnaire Survey

Number Of Students	Items								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	1	1	5	5	1	4	4	1	4
2	2	4	5	5	2	4	4	5	1
3	1	4	5	5	2	4	4	5	2
4	2	4	5	5	1	4	4	4	2
5	2	4	5	5	1	4	4	1	2
6	2	4	5	5	1	4	4	4	5
7	2	4	5	5	1	4	4	4	2
8	1	4	5	5	1	2	5	4	2
9	2	4	5	5	1	4	5	4	4
10	2	4	5	5	2	3	5	3	5
11	4	4	4	5	1	4	5	5	1
12	1	4	4	5	1	2	3	3	2
13	4	4	4	5	1	4	5	3	2
14	4	4	4	5	2	4	5	3	2
15	4	5	4	5	1	3	5	3	5
16	3	5	4	5	1	1	5	3	4
17	3	5	4	5	1	2	5	3	5
18	3	4	4	5	1	2	5	3	5
19	3	4	3	5	1	4	3	3	2
20	4	4	1	5	1	5	4	5	2
21	4	4	4	5	2	2	4	3	2
22	4	4	4	5	1	2	5	1	4
23	4	4	4	5	1	3	5	3	4
24	2	4	4	5	1	4	3	3	1
25	2	4	4	5	1	4	5	3	2
26	1	5	4	5	1	4	5	5	2
27	2	2	3	5	2	2	3	3	2
28	2	2	4	5	1	1	5	3	1
29	2	2	4	5	1	5	5	4	5
30	2	2	4	5	2	3	4	4	4
31	3	4	4	5	1	2	2	4	4
32	3	4	3	5	1	2	5	4	5
33	4	4	4	5	1	5	3	4	4
34	4	4	4	5	1	3	4	4	5
35	4	4	4	5	1	3	5	4	5
36	4	4	4	5	1	3	5	4	2
37	4	4	2	4	1	3	4	4	4
38	4	4	4	5	2	2	4	5	5
39	4	4	5	1	1	2	4	4	4

40	4	4	4	4	1	2	4	1	5
41	4	4	5	4	1	2	4	4	4
42	4	4	5	3	1	1	3	4	1
43	4	4	3	4	2	2	3	4	5
44	4	4	5	5	1	2	4	4	5
45	3	1	5	5	1	3	5	4	5
46	3	2	3	5	1	3	5	4	3
47	3	2	3	5	1	4	5	5	5
48	3	2	5	5	1	3	3	4	3
49	4	4	2	5	1	3	4	2	3
50	4	4	5	5	1	1	4	4	3
51	4	4	5	5	1	3	4	4	3
52	4	4	5	4	1	4	3	1	1
53	3	4	4	3	1	4	4	2	5
54	3	5	4	4	1	3	4	2	3
55	4	5	2	5	1	4	4	2	3
56	4	5	5	5	1	4	4	3	3
57	4	5	2	4	1	3	4	2	3
58	4	5	5	5	1	4	3	5	3
59	4	5	3	4	2	4	4	3	3
60	3	5	4	1	1	3	4	3	3
61	3	5	5	3	1	4	4	2	3
62	3	5	1	5	1	3	4	3	3
63	2	5	5	4	1	4	3	3	3
64	4	5	5	3	1	4	4	3	3
65	4	5	5	4	1	4	4	3	3
66	4	5	4	3	1	3	4	3	3
67	2	5	4	4	1	4	2	4	3
68	4	5	4	2	1	1	4	4	1
69	4	5	4	3	1	2	4	4	3
70	2	5	4	4	1	2	4	4	3
71	2	4	3	4	1	2	4	5	3
72	4	4	4	4	1	2	4	4	3
73	2	4	4	4	1	2	4	4	3
74	2	4	4	5	1	2	4	4	3
75	2	4	5	3	1	3	3	4	3
76	4	4	5	4	1	2	4	4	3
77	4	4	4	4	2	4	4	1	3
78	4	4	4	4	1	4	4	2	3
79	4	4	4	4	1	4	4	2	3
80	4	3	5	4	1	1	4	2	3
81	4	3	4	2	1	2	3	2	3
82	4	3	4	2	1	4	4	2	3
83	4	3	2	2	1	2	4	2	1
84	2	3	5	3	1	4	4	2	3
85	4	3	2	2	1	4	4	2	3
86	4	5	4	3	1	2	4	2	3

87	4	5	5	3	2	2	4	2	3
88	4	5	2	2	1	2	3	5	3
89	4	5	5	3	1	2	4	4	3
90	2	2	4	4	1	3	4	4	3
91	4	2	4	4	1	4	3	4	3
92	2	2	4	4	2	4	4	4	3
93	4	3	4	4	1	4	4	1	3
94	4	2	5	4	1	1	4	4	3
95	2	3	2	3	2	4	4	4	3
96	2	3	5	2	1	4	2	4	3
97	2	3	5	2	1	4	4	4	3
98	4	2	5	2	1	4	4	4	3
99	4	3	5	2	1	4	4	4	3
100	4	2	5	2	2	1	4	1	3