Comparison between Bengali and English Medium Schools' Language Teaching Materials: A Secondary Level Study

By

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Declaration

It is hereby declared that

1. The thesis submitted is my own original work while completing degree at Brac University.

2. The thesis does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.

3. The thesis does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.

4. I have acknowledged all main sources of help.

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Ethics Statement

I hereby, declare that this thesis composed by me is a genuine innovative work and it has not been published anywhere else. This work has been done for the requirement of MA in English, Brac University.

Abstract

Choosing and utilizing appropriate materials is one of the key elements required for a successful language classroom. That is why, it is crucial to select effective language materials according to the target audiences and their social, political, and financial backgrounds. Afterwards, it is indispensable to evaluate the materials in order to examine whether they contain the required standard that will help learners develop their linguistic and social skills. In Bangladesh, students of Bengali medium schools and English medium schools are the highest users of the language materials. Therefore, this study evaluates language materials of both the mediums and, at the same time, demonstrates a comparison between them. *English for Today*, which is given by NCTB, has been selected as the material of Bengali medium schools. *Secondary English* (Book two), which is taught in some of the reputed English medium schools, has been chosen as the material of English medium schools for evaluation. The result and findings demonstrate how different the materials are from each other regarding their nature, characteristics, and overall quality.

Keywords: Materials evaluation; Bengali and English medium schools; English language teaching materials,

Dedication

The dissertation is dedicated to my beloved parents, and teachers who always support, inspire and encourage me to achieve the goals of my life.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Preparing or selecting quality and appropriate materials is critical in making a language class useful. One of the most significant steps in doing that is materials evaluation as it measures relevance, appropriateness, and accuracy of the materials involved. The complex process of this evaluation considers the nature and characteristics of the materials, such as culture sensitivity, quality, quantity, types of exercise, focused skills, variety, and teaching methodology. The study compares the language teaching materials as used in the secondary level of both the Bengali and English medium schools of Dhaka. Bengali medium students study the prescribed language teaching series as given by the National Curriculum and Textbook Board. The English medium schools however, do not follow any such fixed textbook, and instead are under the curriculums of Cambridge University, UK. This paper performs a documents analysis of the language teaching materials of the aforementioned mediums of education in Dhaka, and as such, discusses how similar or different the materials of the two are from each other in terms of their nature and characteristics (Manzano, 2018).

1.1.   Research gap

Materials evaluation allows materials designers to diagnose flaws and suggest revision, and as it is a traditional area of research, there already exist numerous studies done in the context of Bangladesh. However, most of these studies evaluate Bengali and English medium language textbooks separately, leaving scarce comparative research between the two. This study aims to add content in order bridge that gap and help materials designers better understand the conditions through comparison, as opposed to the isolated studies of old.

1.2.   Background of the study

In the context of Bangladesh, the book given by NCTB is followed by all of the country's Bengali medium schools as the foundational material for English language learning. The book is supposed to help develop language skills through engaging and motivating activities, but unfortunately, most studies show that this development is not reflected by the students' actual performance of English in real-life situations. On the contrary, it has been found that the students of English medium schools perform better than their Bengali medium counterparts. It can thus be argued that there is a high possibility of English medium schools utilizing better quality materials for their language classes. This study aims to identify whether language materials used in English Medium schools are indeed better or not, and it also aims to look for any similarities and differences between the two. The research to be done is thus essential as the data and findings will help materials designers of both Bengali and English medium schools to receive the necessary information to revise the present materials, while at the same time improving them for future English language learners.

1.3.   Background of Bengali medium and English medium schools' English teaching materials

It is common knowledge that students of Bengali medium schools of Bangladesh study '*English For Today'* as the core language learning material in their English language classes. Ever since the country's independence in 1971, there have been many changes in English teaching-learning programs, policies, and textbooks. *'English For Today'* was first promoted in 2001 to employ the Communicative Language Teaching method instead of the Grammar Translation Method. According to the preface, the textbook facilitates learner competency by covering all the necessary skills, from practice all the way to development. The present study explores *English For Today* of the class six syllabus as given by NCTB. It will look at the book as the

primary Bengali medium English teaching material to evaluate and compare with the English language material employed by English medium schools (Nayeen, Islam, Chowdhury, & Zayed, 2020).

In contrast to their Bengali medium counterparts, English medium schools do not have any hard and fast materials that are followed. Instead, as the schools are not under the control of a local education administration, different authorities of their respective schools select various kinds of books; they follow foreign curriculums and foreign textbooks. There are a lot of international publishers who supply books for English medium schools, for instance, Cambridge, Peak Publishing, and Viva Education among others. These books actually contain a higher degree of English proficiency than *English For Today*. The book to be selected, evaluated and compared with *English For Today* for this study will be *Secondary English* of standard six. *Secondary English* is utilized in many renowned English medium schools, including Sydney International School, Sunnydale School, Greenherald International School, and Oxford International School. Peak Publishing, London is the publisher of said book. *Secondary English* teaches linguistic features integrating comprehensive and literary texts (Parvin, & Haider, 2012).

Chapter 2

Literature review

Materials can simply be defined as the tools utilized by teachers in class for improved understanding and practice for their students. There are certain proficiency levels, criteria, and characteristics necessary to consider while designing language teaching materials. High quality materials provide learners with real-life exposure as input and at the same time, engage them in using different linguistics features in the classroom through meaningful practices. Such materials may differ from each other in terms of their nature and characteristics, but they can

all be integrated into skill-focused materials for better results. In this section what will be discussed are the frameworks, theories, and critic opinions that are necessary to be present within quality English language teaching materials (McDonough, Shaw & Mashura, 2013).

2.1. Principals of materials design

Most materials writers believe that it is essential to know the principles first before beginning the designing process. Designers should keep some significant notions in mind while undertaking the task. First of all, materials are usually prepared for a course with measurable goals and objectives set by the course designers. The materials must be relevant to the goals and objectives. As engaging, authentic, and communicative activities could increase proficiency level, material designers may include such activities into the materials in order to reach the lesson objectives. Finally, materials should be designed to discover linguistic features from the given materials instead of direct rote learning. Successful preparation of useful language class materials can be achieved by following these objectives (Tomlinson, 2013).

Other differing criteria can also be used to design effective language teaching to help the target learners. Firstly, quality materials incorporate situations that are related to real-life language use, so that learners can be productive while using the materials. Consequently, materials must provide a beneficial outcome to fulfil the measurable purposes of the language courses. Such materials may contain communicative activities that challenge students to complete them, but at the same time, they should not offer too much risk of failure. After writing and designing language materials, the next step is evaluating them to measure their quality, practicality, usability, and overall effectiveness. (Thornbury, 2005).

2.2. Approaches to materials evaluation

Materials evaluation is a systematic procedure for measuring the potential value of language teaching materials. The purpose of materials evaluation is to point out the materials' strengths

and weaknesses to revise and increase their utility. It also helps to identify whether the curriculum's goals and objectives match the material's goals and objectives. There are two practical approaches to materials evaluation. 'Macro' level evaluation, also known as an external evaluation, examines the material's overall outlook impression, whereas 'micro' level evaluation, also considered internal evaluation, evaluates the materials in depth (Ali, 2017).

2.2.1. A model for materials evaluation

Keeping the approaches in mind, it will be useful to look at a model proposed by McDonough, Shaw & Mashura (2013), a model which revolves around the materials' external, internal, and overall evaluation.

The first stage, i.e., the external evaluation examines the comprehensive and external overview of the materials' overall organization; researchers look at the cover, blurb, preface, and table of contents. It discusses the contents contained within the material as well as its goals and objectives. In addition, it considers engaging topics, English proficiency level, target audience, contexts, and the overall presentation.

The second stage of the evaluation process is internal evaluation, which examines the materials in detail. It investigates the linguistics and social skills, authenticity, grading and sequencing, the nature of the tasks and activities, and pedagogical requirements for teaching.

Finally, the third and final stage is the overall evaluation. The usability, generalizability, adaptability, and flexibility factors of the materials are discussed during this stage. It investigates whether the material is useful for the target audience and can be used as a core or supplementary book. It also explores the ability of modification its parts and rigidness of sequencing and grading (McDonough, Shaw & Mashura, 2013).

2.3. Materials according to Skills

Teachers need to teach a set of skills so that learners learn communication through the language, and these skills are related to different aspects of using that language. While teaching

in classes, teachers need to focus on these skills, which is why they must design or choose materials to provide the learners the opportunities to practice. The skills are divided into two types depending on their nature: receptive and productive (Hinkel, 2006).

2.3.1. Receptive skills

Reading and listening involve receiving information from the environment and are considered to be receptive skills. The language users must scan, skim, and infer to decode through reading and listening. That is why it is vital to develop these skills in classrooms through practice, which is not possible without appropriate teaching materials (Davies, 1976).

Reading is one of the essential language skills required for daily life and academic activities. As reading is an interactive process through which the writer and the reader perform silent and passive communication, the reader must decode and interpret the writer's information (Ingold, 2007). That is why the reader needs to learn specific skills to understand and process the text. Recognition of vocabulary, grammar structures, and tenses are significant to decode information at the sentence level. Moreover, understanding sentence and paragraph organization, prediction, and interpretation are tremendous skills to develop the overall reading skill. Therefore, materials designers tend to include these reading materials skills to develop students' reading skills (Mourgues, Preiss & Grigorenko, 2014).

On the other hand, listening comprehension plays a different, but still essential, role in learning a language. It is a feature that exposes learners to how the language sounds in real life. It is thus crucial to develop listening skills in language classes and also develop relevant listening materials; recorded materials designed according to the contents, complexity, authenticity, sphere, theme, and quantity could help develop such skills (Kadagidze, 2006).

Furthermore, the material may have pre-listening activities, listening activities, and post-listening activities. Schema activation and establishing context are done through pre-listening

activities. For instance, reading a short paragraph or commenting on a picture. In the main listening activities, there can be answering true/false or multiple-choice questions, inferring views across the whole text, fill in the gaps, etc. The post-listening activities are the opportunities for follow-up tasks. In this stage, skills can be integrated, e.g., taking notes from the summary, reading a related text, doing a role-play, etc. (McDonough, Shaw & Mashura, 2013).

2.3.2. Productive skills

Productive skills are the active skills that are prominent in producing language in written or spoken form. Writing and speaking are considered productive skills because they help produce appropriate and coherent vocabulary to share ideas and inform and convince. Therefore, the inclusion of reading and writing materials is crucial for the teaching of said productive skills, because they assist in helping students to learn to use the target language. As a result, they can more effectively convey messages and share their feelings and opinions (Mishan, & Timmis, 2015).

Learners must undergo the process of social interaction to carry on communicative performance and develop speaking skills. They need to learn the tone, register, and cultural influences of particular words to associate sentence structures alongside relevant social meaning to develop their communicative competence. Therefore, while teaching speaking skills, teachers must provide communicative activities with deep rooted structures of social meaning so that students get the opportunity to learn and practice using the language in different real-life situations. The activities should help students overcome cross-cultural barriers. Integrating linguistics forms and mechanical, meaningful interactive exercises (including situational ones) could be a great way to develop such skills (Dimas, 2019).

If materials designers provide authentic situational contexts to practice, communicative materials could effectively simulate the use of the target language. This type of material enhances the students' ability for successful and meaningful interaction in the target language. In order to develop skills for meaningful interactions, learners also have to work on the speaking subskills, for instance, fluency, vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. For these reasons, designers focus on all the mentioned skills while making materials for speaking classes. Interviews, role plays, and response questions could be some of the popular examples of speaking activities for such materials. (Yilmaz, 2018).

In contrast, writing materials refer to the instruments that teachers use in an ELT classroom to improve the target language learners' writing skills. To effectively enhance both formal and informal writing skills, the learners need to learn linguistic and grammatical features and learn the language's cultural aspects. Therefore, learners must get authentic exposure to that language through writing materials to understand it from a cultural perspective. As academic writing demands knowledge, skills, and strategies to be followed, practicing academic writing in language classes could very well develop one's writing ability as well. Materials designers may include activities involving students in selecting, organizing, and presenting because these skill developments could help learners produce better pieces of writing (Zhang, Yin, Treiman, 2017).

2.3.3. Materials for integrated skills

According to Wengelin and Arfe (2018), each skill contains completely separate processes; all the skills are closely inter-connected because language use cannot be possible with only a single skill. Studies demonstrate that writing difficulties can be identified from interpreting challenges in reading comprehension or speaking abilities. There are separate language systems for each of the four functions- speaking, listening, reading, and writing. They are interrelated

in terms of language use in our daily life, which is why learners should practice activities that contain integrated skills.

Materials designed by including activities integrating all four skills could help learners be more successful in attaining their target language. To integrate the skills in second language materials, teachers can consider the potential of adding writing into reading exercises. Including reading comprehension in writing activities may provide opportunities to think about the topic, establish an inference, and integrate ideas while writing. It has been found from studies that the language learners who are more experienced at speaking, listening, and reading are also better at writing (Plankans, Liao and Wang, 2018).

2.4. Materials for vocabulary teaching

In order to practice all four language skills, the language learners need vocabulary development so as to better understand speech and express themselves through the language. As the target learners gather the knowledge of words and meanings to decode given information, it makes vocabulary practice very important in language classes. Students may improve their grasp on vocabulary through performing activities that engage them in using words according to different contexts. While selecting the lexical items, materials designers need to be careful so that the vocabulary level matches their current English proficiency level and, at the same time, enrich their knowledge and understanding of words. Sometimes corpus-based vocabulary teaching can also help develop quality vocabulary material (Read, 2007).

2.5. Materials for grammar teaching

Attaining competency in grammar is an integral part of the language learning process as it leads to students gaining specific understanding of the many rules they must follow while producing native-like language in both written and spoken form. Though grammar can be taught deductively or inductively, most researchers believe that the inductive process is better suited.

This is because it is a discovery learning approach through which students learn to figure out the rules independently as opposed to being taught only through textbooks. Different skills can be integrated while designing tasks and materials that would be utilized for grammar teaching. At the same time, it is essential to remember that the materials must contain meaningful real-life interactions where the grammatical rules are practically applied. It will help learners familiarize themselves with the use of grammatical forms practically at both sentence and comprehension levels, rather than only remembering the forms individually (Freeman, 2015).

2.6. Materials for teaching pragmatics

Pragmatics are the socially constructed rules of behaviors and language which are followed while interacting with each other. As such, it is crucial to practice it in language classes. To develop related pragmatic factors, learners need to learn behaviors such as turn-taking, greetings, eye contact, body language, and the way individuals are referenced in conversations. Understanding the social functions of grammatical forms may help learners acquire pragmatics to develop interpretation and communication skills, assisting in real-life social interactions. The textbook designers can thus incorporate a large amount of pragmatic information and situation based creative activities instead of straightforward tasks so that learners become more capable of communicating in different social circumstances. In this case, authentic materials will help them experience more natural sequences of actions and they can practice responses to various authentic social situations (Ishihara & Paller, 2016).

2.7. Tasks and activities in materials

To define briefly, activities are those actions which require learners to perform by utilizing the given information as well as their own thought processes in the language classes. On the other hand, tasks refer to activities with specific goals that engage learners with the process of learning. Both tasks and activities are considered as devices used to elicit the learner language,

and they both contain their respective exercises/drills to support them. Interactive and meaningful tasks/activities work best to teach linguistic as well as cultural elements of the target language as they engage students in actual language use. They create scope to practice and develop the language and the students also end up indirectly paying attention to using form while expressing meaning. When the participants partake in interactive tasks and activities, they emulate behaviour akin to a real language user, regardless of the tasks being either meaning or form-focused. That is why material designers consider classroom activities to not be fully efficient when it comes to focusing on meaning as real-life language users. On the contrary, they emphasize on learnings engaging themselves in comprehensible communication for the development of their English proficiency level, for enhanced motivation, as well as confidence (Ellis, 2017).

2.7.1. Bloom's Taxonomy

Tasks and activities are an essential part of language materials because they allow the learners to practice the target language using their cognitive abilities while also providing opportunity to the teachers for learners' evaluation. In 1956 Benjamin Bloom proposed a framework to categorize the cognitive levels of complexity and specificity into a hierarchical order which could help teachers while preparing their tasks and activities for students. The framework is known as Bloom's Taxonomy, which contains a pyramid-shaped hierarchical order and discusses the six major categories of the cognitive domain to be developed through
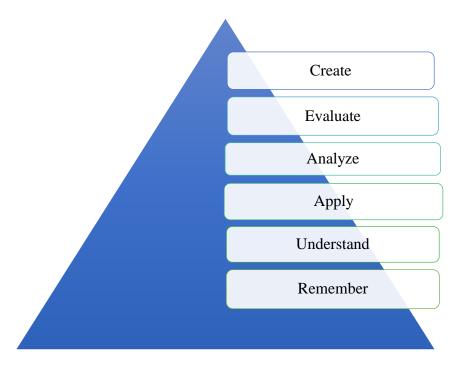
the tasks of lessons (Huitt, 2011).

Figure1: Bloom's Taxonomy (Krathwohl, 2002).

Remember: According to the framework, the act of remembering is at the base of the structure because learners first need to effectively build lower-order thinking abilities, and the least complex among all the cognitive skills is to remember. To practice this skill, students need to memorize and recall specific information without fully understanding it.

Understanding: This cognitive ability level involves decoding communication and understanding facts and ideas by organizing, summarizing, translating, generalizing, describing, and stating the main ideas.

Apply: This level requires the application of the acquired knowledge. It means students learn and practice executing and implementing prior knowledge, facts, techniques, and rules in different situations.

Analyze: On this cognitive level, students need to break down concepts they have learnt into relevant elements or parts so that they can demonstrate relation, differentiation, and organization among ideas.

Evaluate: This is one of the higher-order thinking abilities for which students need to make opinions and judgments based on evidence. In addition, they also are able to criticize according to given criteria and standards.

Create: This sits at the tip of Bloom's pyramid-shaped hierarchical order of thinking ability because the act of creating is the most complex proficiency. Students need to combine multiple elements together in order to produce something e.g., poems and stories. It requires a set of skills that not only generate ideas, but also enable the learner to plan, organize and produce something new (Krathwohl, 2002).

The taxonomy works as a useful guide for designing tasks and activities because learning happens at all levels of thinking. Therefore, it is essential to include these levels of thinking hierarchy into the language practice activities to make the materials more effective (Huitt, 2011).

2.7.2. Theory of multiple intelligence

Materials designers may consider the multiple intelligence theory to design tasks and activities in materials as it could help run an effective language class. Howard Gardner proposed the theory of multiple intelligence in 1983 and it discusses the ways human beings are intelligent through the ways in which we process, learn, and remember information. According to Gardner, though people's intelligence are different from each other, there are at least seven ways to process ideas. That is why he identified seven categories of skills and abilities which materials designers can consider while constructing materials to develop individual intelligence (Shakouri, Behdani & Teimourtash, 2017).

The seven categories of multiple intelligence are Verbal/Linguistic Intelligence, Logical/Mathematical Intelligence, Visual Intelligence, Musical Intelligence, Bodily-kinaesthetic intelligence, Interpersonal intelligence, Intrapersonal intelligence, Naturalistic intelligence, and Existential intelligence. Each of the intelligence types is individually significant to include in English teaching activities because of the vastly unique ways in which learners are allowed to think logically, critically and organize comprehension. The intelligences also teach people to cope-up with human relationships where they deal with each other through meaningful communication (Weber-Segler, 2013).

2.7.3. Grading and sequencing

Grading refers to a book's topic and items, while sequencing is the order of teaching said items. The topics of materials need to be organized according to the level of complexity as well as language development. It is imperative to follow the grading and sequencing for the organization of tasks and activities, so that learners can start practicing from less complicated items and gradually ease their way into more complex ones. Proper grading and sequencing make the material more realistic and usable. However, teachers and other stakeholders should consider the educational and cultural backgrounds of their students and select the appropriate criteria for efficient grading and sequencing of the topics and tasks (Ahmadi & Nazari, 2014).

2.8. Student-centered language materials

In a student-centered class, what is focused upon are the students' needs in terms of language learning and here teachers play passive roles. Such classes promote student independence and autonomy, and for such classes, teachers need to utilize student-centered materials. There are four dimensions to this:

   a) Context sensitiveness: The materials must be target audience-friendly, and to make
      the materials, designers have to know about context, i.e., they must gather information

regarding the social and financial backgrounds of the learners. The materials designers may consider age, English proficiency level, previous knowledge, interests, needs, expectations, and the available time of their target audience.

b) The relevance of learning: The materials could promote meaningful understanding, something that is related to language learning. Practical and personalized materials connected to the learning experience could make the content of the materials more approachable for the learner.

c) Reflection: Student-centered language materials promote reflection on the language and language learning process, allowing students to self-evaluate. Metalinguistic awareness, strategies, learning styles, habits, and learning experience could be considered for this dimension.

d) Participation and social responsibilities**:** This refer to a social factor that promotes cooperative learning through active participation from the students. Problem-solving activities may include initiative, choice, and decision making that can be practiced through language practice materials (Sudiran & Flávia, 2017).

Chapter 3

Methodology and data collection

Qualitative research methodology has been followed to conduct the study as there is no numerical analysis. The holistic nature of qualitative research allows the researcher to explore and investigate the comparison between the English teaching materials of the English and Bengali medium schools. For conducting the study, first source of data are the English textbooks belonging to the two different mediums of schooling, whereas the interviews serve as the second source of data. The researcher is one of the participants of the study who critically examines the data through structured observations. That is why in the study, 'Observation' and

'Document analysis' work as the prominent instruments of data collection. The researcher examines the texts and activities of materials from both the English and Bengali medium schools on the basis of some accepted theoretical frameworks, theories and critic opinions. In addition, some teachers also share their views regarding the features of the book through the interview for the study (Talmy, 2010).

3.1. Designing instrument

Documents Analysis, Observation, and online interview are used as the instruments of data collection. Document analysis is a systematic procedure of evaluating documents for developing empirical knowledge. In the study, its systematic procedure greatly assists in gathering data directly from the selected textbooks, which are soon analysed by following established frameworks. Document analysis is preferred because there is a high possibility of obtaining straightforward, efficient, cost-effective, reliable, and easily manageable data. This data is always available to the researcher as she participates in interpretation (Cardno, 2018).

Observation is used as another powerful instrument of data collection as the researcher herself was a student of a Bengali medium school and, at the same time, a former teacher of an English medium school. This means the researcher has experienced utilizing both the selected books, *English For Today* as well as *Secondary English*. In the study, she uses the observation experience to add data and make the findings of the study more reliable. Though observation is considered to be one of the most common and simplest methods of data collection, it requires some technical knowledge to integrate into the study. Using that technical knowledge, the observation is combined into the study (Cain, Geremia, Conway, Frank, Chapman, Fox, & Sallis, 2018).

Finally, an interview is conducted to gather data, which is used to verify the interpretation of the document analysis and observation. The interview is a method of data collection that needs

to be obtained from people directly. Either one to one or a group interview may be used to gather the necessary data. For this particular research, a one-to-one online interview is conducted with the participants, where they are provided with some open-ended questions. The collected data allows for the study of the participants' views, opinions, and experiences in a holistic manner (Alshenqeeti, 2014).

3.2. Sampling the study

English For Today of class six is selected as the English language teaching materials of Bengali medium schools. Three Bengali medium school teachers are chosen as participants of the interview; they teach the aforementioned textbook in English language classes and as such are familiar with its features. On the other hand, *Secondary English* (book two) is selected for evaluation as the material for English medium schools; for the discussion of the book, an interview is conducted of three English language teachers who utilize *Secondary English* as a core textbook in their English language classes.

Name of school	Number of teachers	Class
Rajdhani Ideal School	1	6
Ideal School and College, Motijheel, Dhaka.	1	6
A. Malek Institution	1	6

Table 1: Teachers discuss *English For Today (Class Six)*

Name of school	Number of teachers	Standard
Sydney International School	1	6
Sunnydale School	1	6
Oxford International School	1	6

Table 2: Teachers discuss *Secondary English (Book two)*

3.3. Data Analysis

After collecting the data, thematic analysis has been applied for the study, and the factors that have been considered for the findings are the interpretation of documents analysis, the observation, and the interview. Participant views, opinions, knowledge, experiences, or values are given concrete form from the data collected from the interview transcripts. A deductive approach is used for the thematic analysis as there has already been assumptions made about some themes and criteria that have been taken from the framework; the data is analyzed according to those themes and criteria. The analysis helps identify common themes, topics, and ideas that repeatedly appear in the documents and interview (Terry, Hayfield, Clarke, & Braun, 2017).

3.4. Ethical issues

The data collected to conduct the study are authentic and obtained from actual working teachers who are permanent instructors of well-established English medium schools. In order to remain within the boundaries of ethics, their actual names have not been used in order for their information to remain confidential. Each and every piece of information regarding the context and purpose of the study has been provided to the teachers. After describing the study and its objectives, the only participants were teachers who willingly agreed to do so. While collecting data, utmost respect was shown and neither physical nor emotional harm came upon the participants. Finally, the data was not analyzed through the bias of any class or gender.

3.5. Limitations of the study

As educational institutions are closed due to the recent COVID-19 pandemic, physical traversal to schools was not possible; instead, the interviews were conducted online. It is also why many teachers could not be reached. If more participants would have been managed, more data could

have been gathered, leading to a better data sample and leading further to more appropriate conclusions. Finally, the timeframe was also brief for the purposes of gathering more data and for preparations of a better sample.

Chapter 4

Result and discussions

From the interpretation of documents analysis, observation and interview, *English for Today* (Class Six) and *Secondary English* (Book Two) are examined by using the model of materials evaluation as proposed by McDonough, Shaw & Mashura (2013). In accordance with the model, the external, internal, and overall evaluation is done in order to evaluate the two selected books.

4.1. External evaluation

There are thirty-five lessons in *English for Today including several activities* whereas, *Secondary English* contains sixteen units and each unit has seven separate segments including activities. Therefore, it can be said that both books contain accurate quantity of topics as well as activities in accordance to the English proficiency level and given time of the target audience.

English for Today covers all the four skills of the language. There are speaking, reading, writing and listening activities, but there are overall fewer listening activities for students to practice listening skills. Among the thirty-five lessons, only three are allocated for listening practice. In addition, these activities do not have pre-listening, listening, and post-listening parts, which decreases their quality. Kadagidze (2006) suggests that listening comprehension is essential because it works as stimulation and exposure for the learners, but this book lacks proper practice for this particular skill. The other more prevalent skills explored by the book are

organized in a discrete, and sometimes, integrated manner. For instance, in the task of "Read silently and ask your pair the following questions," both the reading and speaking skills are integrated.

In contrast, *Secondary English*, the book taught in English medium schools, does not contain listening and speaking activities. While it may appear to be alarming, Dimas (2019) states that meaningful interactive exercises help learners to improve communicative competence. Upon inspection, the book has excellent writing activities integrated with reading activities. Though it does not focus on language skills, it provides a few literary texts succeeding by respective follow-up activities.

English for Today's topics are informative because they provide all kinds of information regarding birds, animals, and cultures. The topics are also engaging and motivating, allowing for better communication between learners. For instance, one of the topics is 'An Unseen Beauty of Bangladesh', a title which itself creates interest among students. Similarly, the topics of *Secondary English* are also engaging and motivating, including interesting reading texts. One such topic is 'Inventors and Inventions' which showcase fascinating stories of successful inventions, and these are followed by writing activities.

Furthermore, the topics of both books are selected according to the English proficiency level of their target audiences. Both contain relevant pictures, but *English For Today* boasts ones that are more realistic in nature while also being more in number than *Secondary English*. The layout and designs of both texts are organized according to the level of complexity. The topics are not put together in a cluttered way and instead, are classified according to tasks.

English for Today's topics are culturally biased because most of them demonstrate cultures of Bangladesh, e.g., 'Birds of Bangladesh,' 'Our Pride' and 'Hason Raja'. Simultaneously,

Secondary English is also biased to western cultures and follows British communication methods through English.

4.2. Internal evaluation

The grading and sequencing of *English for Today* is appropriate across lessons as the book is not divided into units. The grading of the lessons maintains a certain level of complexity across the comprehensive textbook. For instance, the first topic 'Going to a new school' is Lesson 1, and it is less complex than the tenth lesson: 'Remedies: modern and traditional.' The activities are also organized within lessons accordingly; for instance, in Lesson 1, there is a reading text first, followed by writing and speaking activities.

Likewise, the grading and sequencing in *Secondary English* are also appropriate, both across and even within the units. The grammar items provided as practice after every reading text are organized according to their level of complexity. For instance, 'The Sentence' is given in Unit 1, which is less complicated than 'Phrases and Sentences' of Unit 2. Moreover, each unit follows a particular pattern, including a reading text and a list of activities. The pattern is given below.

Unit No
Comprehension
Language practice
Punctuation
Creative writing
Poetry
Spelling
Try thinking

English for Today implies Communicative Language Teaching, and therefore, it teaches grammar and other linguistic features through the communicative framework in an inductive way. The book contains no direct individual grammar rules and definitions. Instead, there are several communicative activities, including ones based around authentic real-life communication where grammar practice is reinforced. For instance, 'Grocery shopping' is one of the topics of communicative activity. There are also a lot of conversations given to provide exposure to the language, but there is no separate activity and dictionary for vocabulary practice. Though the activities provide situations in some of the lessons, again some do not offer any. For example:

Fill in the blanks in the following sentences.

1. I _____ him very well.

2. The new dress _____ great!

3. Rina _____ to collect stamps.

In contrast, there are no communicative activities in *Secondary English*. Each unit contains grammar items in the 'language' segment, and they are presented in a deductive way due to the arrangement of definitions and rules being given first, followed by the provided grammar activities. In the textbook, learners get the opportunity to practice grammar through writing activities and there are situations integrated with them. These activities function as writing workshops: a situation is given and the learners need to write creatively. For example:

Suppose you work in a newspaper organization. Now write a newspaper advertisement for a brand of the following products.
1. Sunglasses
2. Swimming costume
3. Beach umbrella

There are however, activities for vocabulary and spelling practice in each unit, and various little games and unorthodox activities are common for vocabulary practice. These include and are not limited to matching, letter shuffle, and finding the word. There is a dictionary given at the end of the book which helps learners to learn vocabulary.

Both books focus on different intelligence types in tasks and activities that assist in the development of linguistic and social skills for learners. As Weber-Segler (2013) states: intelligence allows learners to think logically, critically, and organize linguistic comprehension; both texts enable them to practice intelligence through various linguistics activities. For instance, group work and pair work improve learner interpersonal and intrapersonal skills.

Secondary English and *English For Today* both follow the level of thinking hierarchy while designing the activities. From the least complex thinking ability of Bloom's Taxonomy hierarchy (i.e. the memory), to the highest complex thinking ability, they are creatively producing something present in the book. For example, in the first activity (taken from *Secondary English*), memory is focused on, whereas in the second (taken from *Secondary English*) and third activity (taken from *English For Today*), learners can practice the highest order of thinking: creating.

Activity 1: Complete the following words that begin with CAR. (taken from *Secondary English*)

   1. A soft floor covering: CAR__ __ __

   2. A large box: CAR__ __ __

   3. A funny drawing: CAR__ __ __ __

Activity 2: Write an outline for s classroom confrontation. (taken from *Secondary English*)

Activity 3: Look at the pictures and write the recipe for a perfect omelet. (taken from *English For Today*)

Furthermore, both the textbooks contain student-centered topics and activities, reflecting the four dimensions of student-centered language materials as proposed by Sudiran & Flávia, (2017). The tasks and activities found in both books are context-sensitive because they fit for their target audience's English proficiency levels and their social and cultural background. In addition, they are also relevant to meaningful learning, promote self-awareness, and allow learners to participate and practice social responsibilities.

Seeing as there are authentic communicative activities in *English For Today*, pragmatics can be taught through interaction. For example, in the lesson, 'Congratulations! Well done', learners learn how to congratulate someone over a telephone conversation. Later on, thy also partake in some follow up activities where they congratulate each other for different given situations. In *Secondary English*, though there are some writing activities to teach pragmatics, no speaking activity is available for practice.

4.3. Overall evaluation

Secondary English and *English for Today* are both books that are usable for their target audience. *English for Today* is fit to reach the goals and objectives of Bangladesh's national curriculum whereas *Secondary English* fits more in line with the Cambridge curriculum. Ultimately, both the textbooks are being used as the core books for the syllabuses of various schools. Additionally, they can be adopted directly or adapted if teachers feel the necessity of any kind of modification. They are different from each other in terms of flexibility, with *English for Today* being more than its counterpart: its contents are less rigid, and learners can study from any of its parts. It can also be fixed in any syllabus as it has the necessary features.

In contrast, the content in *Secondary English* is more rigid, as the grammar items are organized according to the level of complexity and development. The book is not fit for any standardized syllabus as there are no flexible items and activities.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

To summarize, *English For Today* passes the external, internal, and overall evaluation. It also seems from the interview that most of the teachers are also happy with the features of the textbook. The book focuses on all four language skills, including communicative activities. Simultaneously, the activities follow Bloom's Taxonomy and multiple intelligences, which increases the quality of the material. It is usable, adaptable, and also flexible.

On the other hand, *Secondary English* (Book two) does not focus on all the language skills; instead, it focuses on teaching linguistics features, including grammar through literary texts. Though it partially passes external, internal, and overall evaluation, it contains better writing activities than *English For Today* by following Bloom's Taxonomy and multiple intelligence in terms of designing the activities that add value to the book's effectiveness. This book is also usable and adaptable but not as flexible as its counterpart, seeing as it does not contain activities that can fit in any kind of syllabus.

5.1. Recommendation

After the analysis of all the data, the following suggestions may be beneficial:

Suggestions for *English For Today*

a) The listening activity could have more intense practice, including some follow up activities. Technology can be integrated to add listening activities, for instance, a CD may carry the listening text, and the book may contain the activities of the text.

b) The length of the texts could be longer so that learners practice reading longer texts.

c) The activities may include real-life situations to practice linguistics items.

Suggestions for *Secondary English* (Book two)

a) Speaking and listening activities can be integrated.

b) Communicative activities, including real-life situations, may improve the quality of the textbook.

c) More visuals/pictures could make learning more enjoyable.

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Appendix

Questions for teachers

1. Name:

2. Institution:

3. Are the skills of the book integrated or discrete?

4. Are the topics on the Table of Contents page motivating or engaging? Please provide examples.

5. Are the grammar presentations reinforced with extensive practice?

6. Are the tasks communicative? How?

7. Do you think the assumed proficiency level of the book is appropriate? Please, explain how.

8. Does the book contain photographs or images? Do those increase the book's cosmetic value, or are they integrated into the tasks/activities?

9. What do you think about the layout and presentation? Are they cluttered or organized?

10. Is the book culturally biased? Please provide specific examples and explain.

11. What is your comment on the grading (across units) and sequencing (within a unit) of the materials?

12. Are the texts used in the book substantial enough? In other words, is the discourse competence of the learners addressed in the book? Provide examples.

13. Do the activities promote authentic communication among the students? Please explain.

14. Do the tasks repeat topics/items presented previously?

15. Is there an attempt to teach grammar separately or within a communicative framework?

16. Do you think the book could be integrated into a particular syllabus as 'core' or

supplementary? Why?

17. Is the book generally useful for a given individual or group?

18. Is it possible for the book to be added/extracted/used in another context/modified for

local circumstances?

19. How flexible is the book in terms of sequencing and grading?