

Evaluation of Testing English Language: Secondary Examination of Bangladesh

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Abstract

English is the compulsory subject in both secondary and higher secondary level. So, to get admission in the college a student needs to pass in both English 1st paper and 2nd Paper in SSC examination. Unfortunately in most of the cases it has been seen that, many students do well in the SSC examination but they can not give the equal performance in real life situation. Therefore it is really important to evaluate whether language testing in the secondary level going in the right path or not. The aim of this paper is to evaluate the language testing of Bangladesh considering different theories of testing and evaluation, to evaluate the items of language testing and also to discuss the opinions of students and teachers regarding language testing in secondary level.

Table of contents

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Research topic-----	9
1.2 Research questions -----	10
1.3 Rationale behind conducting this Research-----	10
1.4 Methodology -----	12
1.5 Limitation of my Study-----	12

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Definition of Language Test-----	14
2.3 Reasons for Testing-----	15
2.3 Characteristics of a Good Test-----	16
2.4 Different Types of Language Testing-----	20
2.5 Items of the English Language test-----	24
2.5.1 Recognition Item-----	24
2.5.2 Production Item-----	24
2.5.3Objective Testing-----	25

2.5.4 Subjective testing-----	26
2.5.6 Testing Reading skill-----	29
2.5.6.1 Reading Passage-----	29
2.5.6.2 Multiple choice items-----	30
2.5.6.3 True False-----	35
2.5.6.4 Completion Item-----	36

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Research design-----	37
3.2 Methodologies-----	37
3.2.1 Written questionnaire-----	38
3.3 Participants-----	39

Chapter 4: Findings and Analysis

4.1 Findings-----	41
4.1.1 Results found in Students for	
English 1st paper question paper-----	41
4.1.1.1 Reading Skill Testing- -----	43
4.1.1.2 Vocabulary Testing-----	44

4.1.1.3 Matching and Rearrangement-----	45
4.1.1.4 Composition Testing-----	46
4.1.2 Teachers survey for English 1 st paper question-----	48
4.1.2.1 Reading Passage and Reading tasks-----	48
4.1.2.2 Matching & Rearrangement-----	50
4.1.2.3 Composition Testing-----	50
4.1.3 Students Survey of English 2 nd paper question-----	52
4.1.4 Teachers Survey of English 2 nd paper question-----	56
4.2 Analysis of the English Question Paper of 2012-----	59
4.2.1 English 1 st paper question-----	59
4.2.1.1 Part A-----	59
4.2.2 English 2 nd Paper question-----	63

Chapter 5 Recommendation:

5.1 Recommendation for English 1 st Paper question-----	68
5.2 Recommendation for English 2 nd Paper question-----	69

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1 Summary of the research-----	71
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6.2 Research questions	72
References	75
Appendix	77

Evaluation of Testing English Language: Secondary

Examination of Bangladesh

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Research Topic

McNamara (2003) described test as “a universal feature of social life” (p. 3). In today’s highly competitive globalized world, “language testing” has become a crucial issue for every person. Though it may sound very controversial, testing language is slightly different from testing other subjects because for other subjects like mathematics or physics, if a person does well in the test we can assume that the person is good at that particular subject but in case of language testing, if a person does well in the examination, we can not be sure that s/he will also be good in implementation of language when s/he has to deal with real situation. In Bangladesh, English is a compulsory subject in every public examination. Therefore it is really a big issue that how successful these examinations are being to test the language skills of the students. Unfortunately, in Bangladesh, both in SSC and HSC examinations only writing skill, reading skill and grammar skill of students are being tested. Whereas, other two important skills like listening skill and speaking skill are not being tested at all.

The main objective of my study is ,to analyze the question paper of both English 1st paper and English second paper of SSC level in terms of the theories of testing and evaluation.

Another objective of my study is to judge whether these examinations are actually being able to test a student's language skills or not.

1.2 Research Questions

The aim of the research is to know the following questions:

1. What perception do the students bear regarding the English question of both English 1st paper and English 2nd paper?
2. What problems do the teachers face to construct both English 1st paper and English 2nd paper question in more interesting way?
3. Why both English 1st paper and 2nd paper questions in SSC examination are far behind from CLT fashion and still somehow following the examination pattern of Grammar Translation Method?
4. How to improve Language Testing in SSC level in Bangladesh?

1.3 Rationale behind conducting this Research

No matter what a person's area of study, it has become a crucial requirement that he has to be proficient in the language which will be his medium to study his desired subject. For many years, researchers of English language testing trying to make language test compatible to the real life situation because ultimately the person has to use language in

real life situation. So, Language testing has to pass a long way to come to this modern situation and still researchers are working how to make it more closer to the standard form of test. It is very clear that, there is a very close relationship between language testing and language teaching. For example, when the popular teaching method was Grammar Translation Method (GTM) then the language tests were basically focused on memory testing because in GTM memorizing grammatical rules, vocabulary, sentences etc have very important role. Testing process again has changed when the popular method became Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). At that time, testers tried to make the test as similar as possible to the real life situations because CLT believes that the main purpose of language learning is achieving communicative ability. In Bangladesh, if we look at the devolvment pattern of English Language Teaching, then we will see that even few years ago all the text books were based on GTM but now authorities are including English For Today which is basically developed in a CLT fashion but unfortunately our testing process has not changed along with the changing books. Most of our English question papers are still following the previous memory testing format. As English is called the global language of the world and most of the developing countries like Bangladesh use English as their second or foreign language, English has become a compulsory subject in both SSC and HSC level. So, to get the admission into colleges students have to pass in both English 1st paper and 2nd paper in the SSC level and in the case of getting admission in the university students have to fulfill the required language proficiency of that university. So, to judge whether a person has enough proficiency in English or not, there is still no other better option than Language testing. Not only to get admission in educational institutions but also to go to any English

speaking countries or to get scholarships from foreign countries people have to go through some of the International language tests which will help the authority to judge whether the person has required English proficiency or not. So, in a developing country like Bangladesh, to compete with the world we have to go through several public English examinations to prove that we are capable of going further. So it is really important for us to have a clear conception whether our public examinations on English Language are matching the importance level of it or not.

1.4 Methodology

This is a primary research because all of the data has been collected directly from the participants of this research, not from any secondary sources. I have used different methods to conduct this research. They are:

1. Survey with teachers
2. Survey with students
3. Internet and Library, to search different theories of Language testing and also to find opinions different scholars of Language Testing.

1.5 Limitation of my study

There are several limitations that the survey conductor has to deal while conducting the research. They are:

- As this is requirement for the Undergraduate program, there was time constraint for the research conductor to do this research. For this reason the survey conductor had to limit her survey among few teachers and students of Dhaka city.
- Because of Ramadan and other political issues in Bangladesh most of the schools had a lot of vacations. For these reasons, the survey conductor has to visit some teachers personally to conduct the survey.
- Most important problem is finding out related materials to support my research. I did not find any single work done on this topic in Bangladesh. For this reason, the main source of the theory part of my research is totally based on the writers of other countries. For this reason, survey conductor has to face problems to relate those theories with Language testing of Bangladesh.

Chapter 2

Literature review

2.1 Definition of Language Tests:

Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics (1985) defines “test” as a procedure of measuring ability, knowledge or performance. (p. 291). So, here the main focus is the measuring purpose of the test. There is an ongoing debate regarding “testing” and “assessment”. Caroline Clapham (2000) in her article “Assessment and testing” mentions about different authors opinion regarding testing) and assessment. To define testing she said, tests are more formal than assessment. So for her, IELTS is a formal test but classroom tests are assessment. (p. 150).

Hyun- Ju Kim in his article “World Englishes in Language Testing: a call for research”(2006) emphasizes on the goal of language assessment by saying, “the goal of language assessment is to reduce to the greatest possible degree sources of error external to the learner’s performance, so as to reflect the candidate’s true ability”. (p. 32)

Penny Ur(1991) in her book *A course in Language Teaching practice and theory* describes test “as an activity whose main purpose is to convey (usually to the tester)” how well the testees know or can do something.”(p.33). So here, unlike Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics she is focusing on broader purpose of Language testing.

Heaton in his book (1976) *Writing English Language test* defines “language test” as a “device to reinforce learning and to motivate students or as means of assessing students performance in the language.” (p.1). So, here Heaton is basically emphasizing the

function of tests while giving the definition of the test because effect of testing over learning and to assess students' performance, are regarded as the primary function of language testing.

2.2 Reasons for Testing:

In this highly competitive world we can not ignore the importance of tests because to select the most desirable candidates and also to measure the performance of students, testing is still considered as the best way. J.B Heaton (1976) in his book *Writing English Language Test* wrote about different kinds of tests and also the importance of tests. According to his observation, there are two types of tests which are frequently used in the modern world. One is "classroom test" and the other one is "external test". Importance of these two types of tests is different. In the case of the former one the main aim is individual performance, "difficulty encountered by the class or by the individual" and also to have a "backwash effect". "A well- constructed classroom test will provide the student with an opportunity to show his ability to recognize and produce correct forms of the language." (p.2). The latter type of test is called "external test" which is generally used to select students and also for evaluation purposes (p.2). In my paper, my main focus will be on SSC question papers of language testing in Bangladesh and SSC examination is an "external test". Another important point that Heaton (1976) has raised in his book is, why for foreign learners it is important to produce correct English. According to this writer, in many traditional tests, the test itself has been designed in such a way so that the test can measure the components of language and their answering techniques in the exams instead of measuring the proficiency to use that language which

indicates that, examinees who have to go through these kind of traditional exams will be good at different components of language instead of the use of that language. (p. 2-4)

Brian Tomlinson (2005) in his article “Testing to Learn: A Personal View of Language Testing” writes that according to him the main purpose of Language testing provide an opportunity for both learners and teachers by providing them an scope to develop their position. (p. 39)

2.3 Characteristics of a Good Test

It is said that a completely standard test is just a myth but testers should try to get much closer as possible. David P. Harris (1969) in his book *Testing English as Second Language* wrote about the characteristics of a good test. According to Harris, all good tests should have three characteristics: Validity, Reliability and Practicality.

In case of reliability, Harris talked about two different kinds of reliabilities of the test.

They are:

1. Test reliability
2. Marker's reliability.

We can increase the reliability of the test by taking adequate samples from the students. To explain this point he mentioned that, a test which contains a large number of items is reliable than the test which has only one essay type item. We can achieve the maximum scorer reliability in case of multiple choice items because in objective type questions there is no scope for scorer's judgment. Harris (1969) said, “Reliability refers purely and simply to the precision with which the test measures. No matter how high the reliability quotient, it is by no means a guarantee that the test measures what the test users want to

measure.”(p.18). We can say that, it fully depends on the test users what will be tested. Jeremy Harmer (2001) in his book *The Practice of English Language Teaching* gives importance over the consistency of the result to describe reliability. According to him, the result of a good test should not change in a short time period. (p.322)

Then the second point of a good test is Validity. Harris (1969) in his book asked two important questions which define validity. They are: “(1) what precisely does the test measure? And (2) How well does the test measure?” (p. 19). So if we consider these two questions we can say, if the test actually measures what it supposed to measure and if the test scores match with the actual ability of the test takers in that area then we can call it a valid test. For example, if the test is supposed to test the grammar skill of the students but if the task of the test is on vocabulary instead of grammar, the test is not valid because it is not measuring what it supposed to measure. Jeremy Harmer (2001) in his book *The Practice of English Language Teaching* says “a test is valid if it tests what it is supposed to test.”(p.322). To emphasize his points Harmer (2001) also says that, to test writing skill if the test contains an item which is a composition based on biology then the tester must make sure every examinees are aware of the specialized vocabulary used in the composition otherwise the test will not be regarded as a valid test (p. 322) . Harris (1969) in his book mentions different types of validities which a test should apply like content validity, empirical validity, face validity etc. If the test is based on the course outline of a course then we can expect the test will reflect all the items in the course outline and then we can say that test has “content validity”. To decide whether a test has its empirical validity or not we should observe, whether the test score has correlation between any

“trustworthy external criterions” or not and if the test has a high correlation then we can say that test is empirically valid (p. 21). Face validity of a test refers to “the way the test looks – to the examinees, test administrator, educators and the like” (p. 21).

Harris (1969) mentions about the third important factor to measure a good test is “practicality”. We can prepare a test which is highly reliable and valid but that test can be beyond our means or facilities. Under the Practicality, Economy, Ease of administration and scoring and Ease of interpretation are important issues. From this discussion we can say that, if a test contains all these three elements we can call that a good test. (p. 21-22).

Brian Tomlinson (2005) in his article “Testing to learn: a personal view of language testing” writes about the importance of learning in the time of testing. According to this author, a good test should provide the learners an opportunity to learn something new. To emphasize his point he said that, language tests should be informal so that students do not get chance to take preparation. He did the same thing with the students of English at Kobe University in Japan. His students did not know which parts of the test are going to be counted as test. The reason behind this unfamiliar suggestion according Tomlinson is, if testers follow this procedure they can actually get a reliable sample of the competency of language of those students because in this case students are not wasting their time in preparing themselves for an unfamiliar test rather the answer of those tests are the natural responses of the students. The author of this article also suggested some ways through which testers can provide an opportunity for the learners to learn something new during the test time. Some of these suggestions are discussed here:

- Presenting a new knowledge to the learner during the test time and ask them to apply it in the test.
- Teaching something new while testing something different. For example, while testing the comprehension skill teaching a feature of language from the text.
- Avoid using the familiar topics or familiar texts as reading or listening texts and use something different which the students are not familiar with.
- Testing the learners in pairs or groups so that they can learn from each other.

(p. 44)

It is true that the techniques suggested by Tomlinson can not be fully applicable in public examination but some of the suggestions the testers can easily follow. For example, in SSC examination while preparing the question paper testers can easily avoid familiar texts. As for English 1st paper same book is followed by all over the country which is *English For Today*, authority should have a policy not to give exactly the same text in the examination. But the situation is not like that language testing in Bangladesh because here most of the students memorize all the important passages from English 1st paper book to get familiar passage in English 1st paper examination. In English 2nd paper examination where the topics of the fill in the blanks or story writing are supposed to be an unseen one, teachers always repeat the same passages which make the students to jot down certain passages and memorize the entire task so that they do not have difficulty during the examination time.

2.4 Different types of Language Testing

On the basis of the purpose of the Language testing Arthur Hughes (2003) have divided the language testing into two broad categories which are, “Formative test” and “Summative test”. To describe these two broad categories, Arthur Hughes in his book *Testing for Language Teachers* writes that formative tests are basically designed by the classroom teachers in a form of quizzes, class tests, informal test etc. The purpose of these formative tests are, to find out students difficulty, improvement and even to have a backwash effect which Hughes described as effect of testing over learning and teaching.(p.1). On the contrary, Hughes refers summative tests have broader purpose than formative tests because the result of the summative test has influence over people’s promotion, getting admission, immigration etc. Summative tests are usually taken at the end of the semester or term. (p. 5)

Tomlinson (2005) writing about the formative and summative tests are quite similar to what Hughes has said in his book because he also refers formative tests as classroom test which will help both the teachers and students to overcome their lacking and summative tests as a medium to measure whether a student has actually achieved the course goal or not.

Peter W. Airasian (2007) in his book *Classroom Assessment* made a table to show the differences between formative test and summative test. According to him, the aim of the formative test is to monitor and guide a process during the course time where as the purpose of summative test is to evaluate the success of a process after its completion. (p.151)

Harmer (2001) in his book *The Practice of English Language Teaching* writes about four types of tests on the basis of purpose of the test. They are:

- **Placement Test:** On the basis of this test students are promoted to the next class. Usually in this case students have to follow a particular syllabus and they are tested on that at the end of the semester or they have to attend several examinations through out the semester to prove that they are ready to go for the next class.
- **Diagnostic Test:** In this test the main purpose is to find out learner's difficulty and lackings during the course time so that teachers can solve those problems.
- **Progress or achievement Test:** These tests are designed to measure learners' development in terms of language skills in relation to the syllabus they are following for that particular language test. Harmer also pointed out that, the task and the passages should be similar like the tasks they have done in their class time because otherwise the result of the achievement test will loss reliability.
- **Proficiency Tests:** These tests are usually used to measure whether a student is suitable to get admission in a foreign university or not. These types of proficiency tests usually measure the overall progression of a student. (p. 321)

Hughes (2003) in his book *Testing for Language Teachers* classified the tests on the basis of its content. They are:

- **Direct Vs Indirect Testing:** When a test requires the testee to perform exactly what we want to measure then that is “direct testing”. For example, if we want to test a student’s ability to write composition and the tester ask him/ her to write a composition; that is basically direct testing. On the contrary, when the test contents ask something to do the testees but it wants to measure something else then that is “indirect testing”. For example, if the instruction asks the testee to write a composition but the tester’s intention is to check the grammar knowledge of the testee through this composition writing, then that is “indirect testing”.
- **Discrete point Vs Integrative testing:** If the test, tests one element at a time that is “Discrete point testing”. Whereas, if the candidates are required to combine different language elements to complete a single task then that is “Integrative testing”.(p. 11-19)

McNamara (2008) in his book *Language Testing* describes the changing path of language testing. According to this author, though even before few years ago the scenario of the language test is quite similar like other paper pencil test but recently in modern testing system the scene is not like that. Here, may be the examinees are asked to write something for their writings skill test or to record something for their oral production. What McNamara tried to say is that, though the scenario of the language test has been

changed but the purpose of the language test is still same that is to measure students' ability to use language. (p. 4)

Similarly, Patriccia Dooley (2008) in his article "Language Testing and Technology: problems of transition to a new era" wrote about the use of computers to test language which has become a common practice all over the world. He wrote about both the positive and negative impacts of computerized language testing but in the concluding part he says that instead of having some negative impacts like computer familiarity, problems in case of reading, computerized language testing are more reliable than paper pencil test (p.24-26). So, here we can see McNamara and Dooley are both talking about the changing pattern of language testing. In SSC examination, both English 1st paper and English 2nd paper tests are paper pencil test, though we have some objective questions like Multiple choice items, fill in the blanks etc but still both of these tests are answered and marked just like paper and pencil tests. So in this case we can say that, in Bangladesh two important language tests which is English 1st paper and 2nd paper examination are far behind what the most of the modern countries are following. Even in the assessment process, computer is not being used in Bangladesh whereas in modern world in most of the cases, assessment is done by the help of technology to make the result more reliable.

2.5 Items of the English Language test:

Different authors have different view points regarding test items. They divide the test items as "recognition items" Vs "production items" "Discrete item" Vs "Integrative

item”, Direct item Vs Indirect item etc. JB Heaton (1976) in his book *Writing English language test* writes about the two different items of the language test which are “recognition item” and “production item”.

2.5.1 Recognition Items:

By recognition item, Heaton wants to refer, items which give options to students to recognize the correct or best answer. For example,

1. Choose the best/correct answer:

- I am _____ to school.

I. go

II. going

III. went

IV. gone

In this example students have to choose or recognize the correct answer from the given options. These types of items are known as “recognition items”.

2.5.2 Production item:

By production item Heaton refers to those items of the test where students have to produce the right or correct answer. For example,

A. Use the correct form of the verb:

- I am not _____ (go) to school.

In this example students have to produce the correct form and these kinds of items are known as production items of the test.

Generally Multiple choice questions, fill in the blanks with clues are referred as recognition items. On the contrary, fill in the blanks without clues, composition writing etc are known as production items. (p. 8).

Heaton(1976) in his another chapter referred again two broad categories which are “objective testing” and “subjective testing”. Though both of these terms are usually referred to the scoring of the test but still it also refers to the two different kinds of items of the test. Heaton (1976) referred test as a set of objective types of items and examination as a set of subjective type of items.

2.5.3 Objective testing:

Heaton (1976) referred to MCQ, fill in the blanks or completion items, transformation, addition, rearrangement etc as objective type of questions. As there is one possible answer of each item of objective question, they can be marked by computers. This is the main reason of why objective tests are becoming more and more popular in language testing. In objective testing, the tester has to spend much time in preparing the questions but has to spend very little time in marking objective tests. There are several criticisms of objective testing that Heaton has discussed in his book. They are:

- Items of Objective tests are strictly criticized because they are easy to answer. The difficulties of the objective tests totally depend on the tester that means he can make the test as hard or as simple according to his wish.

- Objective testing encourage guessing of the students. For example, in case of multiple choices items, there are 4/5 options from which students have to choose correct or best answer. So, if candidates can guess two of them as incorrect answers, he can easily guess the correct answer will be from the other two alternatives. Another important point is, by objective testing the tester really can not understand in most of the cases that whether candidates actually know the correct answer or they just know the incorrect answers and that's how they select the correct answer.
- Another major criticism regarding objective testing is, it can not measure a person's actual ability to "communicate" in the target language because in objective testing we can just test the items of language not the use of language in real life situation.(p. 12)

Instead of having such valid criticisms, objective testing are becoming more and more because of its easy marking system in most of the public exams.

2.5.4 Subjective tests:

By subjective tests Heaton (1976) refers to composition writing, letter writing. In other words, items which can have different answers and has to be marked subjectively are used as subjective test items. In the case of subjective testing, testers has to spend very little time in preparing those tests but has to spend long time to check those answers because different students can have different perspectives of the same questions.

Harris (1969) in his book *Testing English As A Second Language* includes Comparison of composition writing and objective test of writing. In this portion, he has given both the positive and negative sides of composition and objective tests of writing.

Positive sides of Composition testing are:

1. Through composition testing testers can test some very important writing skills of the students like organization, cohesion etc.
2. Composition testing motivates students to improve their writing. If they do not have to write they will not develop their writing skill.
3. Composition tests can be prepared very easily and quickly

Critiques of Composition Testing:

1. The result achieved by composition test is less reliable than objective testing because students will not perform exactly the same way in every topic and the marking procedure of composition testing is very much subjective.
2. In composition writing students can easily avoid their shortcomings in language.
3. The marking procedure of composition test is time consuming. (p. 70)

Harris(1969) also suggested different steps that the test makers should follow while designing composition testing. They are:

- **Arrange to take several samples, rather than just one:** The reason behind this is we can achieve higher reliability by testing 2 or 3 small composition than one single big composition.

- **Set the writing task which is within the reach of all:** We should avoid those topics which can be proved easy for some students and difficult for others. So, the topic of the composition writing should be within the reach of everyone's knowledge capacity.
- **Make the writing task clear and specific:** The instruction of the composition test should be very structured and clear so that students can understand what they are supposed to do.
- **Allow no alternatives:** Harris is suggesting having no alternatives in composition testing because then our marking can be problematic as different students will have written in different topics.
- Pretest the writing test assignments.(p. 77- 78)

2.5.6 Testing Reading Skill:

2.5.6.1 Reading Passage

Harris(1969) in his book introduces some characteristics that a reading passage should have. They are:

1. **Length:** Passages should be kept brief. Harris is suggesting that, passages of between 100- 250 words are considered as proper.
2. **Subject matter:** Harris is suggesting, the subject matter of the texts should not provide any advantage to any particular group of students that's why culturally biased subject matters should be avoided. Moreover reading passage should not

deal with topics which are universally known. While selecting a passage from the book care should be taken so that the passage should not appear unrealistic.

3. Style and Treatment of Subject:

Harris is suggesting to avoid some particular passages while selecting reading passages for test. They are:

- Compare contrast passages
- Deal chronologically with a series of events
- Author's personal opinion on a single subject

4. Language:

Reading passage should not contain too many difficult words. Tasks under the reading passage should be realistic and considering the capacities of second language learners. (p.60-61)

2.5.6.2 Multiple Choice Questions(MCQ):

MCQ is regarded as the most widely used objective item in most of the public exams. In our SSC examination we find MCQ related to a reading passage. As I have mentioned before the tester has to spend a bit long time to prepare a good item in objective testing. Here the tester has to maintain some instructions while designing any item like MCQ, fill in the blanks or true false because otherwise the item may fail to measure a student's performance for a particular language element.

According to Heaton (1976), it is the most difficult item to design but most easy item to score. In most of the MCQ items there will be one initial and four or five options. Among these four or five options one will be the correct answer. For example,

- When I met Faria yesterday, it was the first time I _____ her after the holiday.
 - A. seen
 - B. have seen
 - C. Saw
 - D. Seeing
 - E. None of the above

So, in a MCQ item there will be three portions:

1. Stem: The initial portion is known as the stem. The main purpose of the stem is to present the item clearly and concisely. In the stem tester generally add information which has to repeat in each option. The stem may take different forms like:

- **An incomplete statement:** For Example,

We are _____ to school

- a. Gone b. Went
- c. going d. go

- **A complete statement:** For example,

Nothing he wanted was **to hand**.

- a. Well cared for b. under control
- c. within reach d. being prepared

- **A question:** For example,

According to the writer, what did Max immediately do?

- a. He ran home b. He ate food
- c. He went to sleep d. He started to shout

While constructing the stems ending with determiner like auxiliary verb, article or prepositions tester should be very careful while making the every option because sometimes it makes easy for students to find out the correct answer or it can also limit the options for the students. For example,

1. Someone who give us medical treatment is a
 - a. architect b. doctor
 - c. engineer d. teacher

In this example students can easily omit option “a” and “c” as these are grammatically incorrect options. The same concern goes to while ending the stems with auxiliary verb or prepositions.

2. **The correct option:** In MCQ type items it is recommended that the item will have only one correct option so that anyone can check that item and testees do not get confused by seeing more than one correct option. While developing the correct option it is recommended that the correct option should be grammatically

correct and should be the same length like the other options so that students do not get any irrelevant clue while selecting the answer.

3. **Distractors:** Each distractor should be attractive to the students who do not know the correct answer. Otherwise, testees can easily limit their options by eliminating the incorrect options. For example,

a. We should help_____ poor people

i. an ii. the

iii. a iv. this

Here, students who even do not know the correct answer can easily eliminate option “i” because it is grammatically incorrect. Another thing that the tester should keep in mind is that to avoid absurd items in the option. For example,

A. Peter travelled in the sea by

a. a gas balloon b. a plane

c. a boat d. a ship

In this example, option “a” and option “b” are two absurd options because plane and gas balloon are not used to travel in the sea. (p 14-20)

Hughes (2003) in his book *Testing for Language Teachers* write about some of the common advantages of MCQ items in any language test. First of all the scoring of the MCQ items is quick and economical. The second point that Hughes has made is that it allows the language speaker to produce language or to present his grasp over the target language without making him speak or write in that language. (p. 76)

Hughes also included some of the problems of MCQ items. They are:

- **The technique tests only recognition knowledge:** By assessing multiple choice items we can not have a clear conception regarding the proficiency of using that language in real life. Because a person can do well to recognize the correct items but s/he can be weak in using that language.
- **Guessing have a considerable but unknowable effect on test scores:** Like Heaton Hughes also mentions about the guessing chances in multiple choice items. According to Hughes there is a strong chance of finding out the correct answer just by guessing. To reduce this chance of guessing Hughes is suggesting “every effort should be made to have at least four options” (p. 77)
- **The technique severely restricts what can be tested:** It limits the possibility to test the desired language items because it is not possible to always find three or four distracters or we can say it is really difficult to find three or four grammatically correct structures.
- **It is difficult to write successful items:** As in MCQ items it is really difficult to find good distracters so it ultimately limits the possibility of good items. According to Hughes “from my experience multiple choice items that are produced for use within the institutions are often shot with faults. Common amongst are: more than one correct option one correct answer, there are clues in the options as to which is correct” (p.77).
- **Backwash effect can be harmful:** MCQ items can have severely negative effect on teaching and learning because it is not really a good way for students to improve their command over English they can recognize the right answers just by guessing.

- **Cheating may be facilitated:** In case of MCQ items, it is easy to cheat because the answer of the MCQ items can be exchanged with each other without making any sound. Hughes suggested an option to avoid or reduce cheating that the different versions of the same test where the number of the option will be different. (p. 77)

Heaton (1976) in his book has suggested some rules which should be maintained if multiple choice items are given from a reading passage. They are:

- **Number of MCQ items:** Reading comprehension test should contain fewer MCQ items than testing of other skills because here a student has to read the passage once or twice before he starts to do the MCQ items. Moreover, it also depends on the length of the passage.
- **Time allocation for each item:** tester should allowed 10 to 15 seconds for each item for testing grammar and vocabulary but the tester should allocate at least one or two minutes for each MCQ item while testing the reading skill.
- **Direct questions from the passage should be avoided:** Tester should avoid giving direct words or phrases in MCQ items because in this type of question students only need a shallow understanding of the passage to answer those direct questions. (p. 114)

2.5.6.3 True False:

True False items are one of the most commonly used reading items in the test because of its simple construction, easy marking procedure and reliability. According to Heaton (1976) True false questions are more suitable for classroom situation because it allows

the class teacher time for his other class works. Heaton also included two disadvantages of true false items. They are:

- A Teacher can not be sure whether students actually know the correct answer or it is just a mere guess because in true false items the chance of giving the correct answer is 50%.
- Students can guess the correct answer.
- To avoid the chances of guessing Hughes (2003) have mentioned suggestion of different experts that is to ask to mention why they think the answer is true or false., But there is also a counter part which says this is really not a writing task and secondly it is difficult to score because of validity and reliability problem.

Airasian (2007) wrote in his book that, the main problem of using true false items is “their susceptibility to guessing.” (p.175)

2.5.6.4 Completion Items

Heaton (1976) refers the completion items as a way to measure the recall of the passages. In these items students generally need to answer or complete certain questions by a phrase or word or by a full sentence.

For example,

1. Why did Marry go for a vacation?

Ans: _____.

Here Heaton is suggesting the testers either has to make sure that there will be one possible answer or every valid logical answer should be regarded as correct. There is another type of item which is also regarded as completion item which is called fill in the blanks.

For example,

1. Marry went _____ for her vacation. (p.112-122)

Chapter 3

Research Methodology

In this part I will describe the research methodology of the paper. In first part I will describe the research design and then the participants, the data collection procedure and the method of conducting the survey.

3.1 Research Design

The research is done among a small group of teachers and students. The survey has been conducted in a both quantitative and qualitative way to make the findings easier and effective. Thus in my research analysis I have applied the mixed method. According to John Creswell, in a mixed method the researcher uses both quantitative and qualitative way in a single study to make the survey more reliable. Thus mixed method help the researcher to have a deeper understanding of the subject by allowing him to broaden his perspective and it also helps to analyze the data in all possible ways. (qtd in Johnson , R. Bruke, Anthony J. Onwuegbuzie, and Lisa A. Turner).

3.2 Methodologies

The methodologies used in this research are:

- 2 Students survey
- 3 Teachers survey

In my research I have used questionnaire for both types of participants. Questionnaire is considered as one of the most useful way to get an effective result because the researcher can easily interpret the result and also it is to count the responses in a questionnaire form. Moreover, it is also easy for the participants to fill up the questionnaire form. Seliger and Sohamy has pointed out different usefulness of questionnaire form. For example, we can use questionnaire form among a large group of people at the same time, less expensive, results from the questionnaire are standard, anonymity can be assured etc.(p.172)

3.2.1 Written questionnaire

There are number of ways to design questionnaire. One of the most common and widely used method is, using the rating scale. In my survey I have used reverse Likert scale as my rating scale. Here there are five points which I have used in my questionnaire for both teachers and students. They are:

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Not sure
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree.

I have also used multiple choice type open ended questions where I have given four options among which they have to choose one. I have also included a space for comments

under each question so that I can get their view points more clearly. I have divided the questionnaire for both teachers and students in two parts.

In the first part, I have included the general information of the students and teachers. For example, in the students' survey I have included the class of the students and in the teacher's questionnaire I have included the year of experience and level of teaching.

In the second part, I have included the questions for the students and teachers. The questions were designed according to the different topics of SSC examination in both English 1st paper and 2nd paper which has covered grammar testing, composition testing, testing reading skills, vocabulary testing etc.

Research conductor has designed the survey questions by considering some aspects:

- Literature on the research
- Objective of the study
- Discussion with the supervisor of the study

3.3 Participants:

To conduct the survey 25 students of class X who are studying two renowned schools of Dhaka were selected and 10 English teachers of two different schools who have experience in preparing question for SSC examinations, were chosen to conduct this survey.

I have chosen teachers who have experience in preparing questions for the schools IX and X English questions. The minimum year of experience for the teachers in my survey is 4 years and the maximum is 14 years.

Year of Experience	Number of teachers
4-7	3
8-11	4
11-14	3

Table 1 : Year of experience of the teachers

All of the participants for my students' survey are the SSC candidates for the following years. For the collection of the data the survey conductor went through teachers in their coaching centers as it is easy for contacting with them. The teachers and students were given instructions by the survey conductor while filling up the survey questionnaire. All the teachers and students appear to be very sincere while filling up the survey questions.

Chapter 5

Findings and Analysis

4.1 Findings:

In the findings part the questionnaires will be discussed in detail including a detailed explanation of themes of the questions. As the first part of the questionnaire is only about the personal information of the teachers and students, the discussion will be started from the 2nd part of the questionnaire. There are basically two themes of these two types of questionnaire. They are:

- Opinions of the participants regarding different parts of the question papers of language testing in secondary level.
- How to improve the pattern of English language testing so that it becomes a more reliable and valid language test.

4.1.1 Results found in Students survey for English 1st paper question paper:

As English 1st paper survey questionnaire I have followed the Likert scale, I will also use an interpretation scale to interpret result. My interpretation scale will be:

- a) 1.00-2.25: Strongly Disagree
- b) 2.26-3.00: Strongly disagree
- c) 3.01- 3.75: agree
- d) 3.76-4: Strongly agree

The result that the survey conductor has got of the survey question of students for the evaluation of English 1st paper question of SSC examination is given below:

For each Item the number of response is 25

No of Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean Score
1	3 15	17 68	2 6	3 6	0 0	3.8
2	1 5	2 8	4 12	16 32	3 3	2.4
3	10 50	4 16	2 6	7 14	2 2	3.52
4	2 10	2 8	2 6	18 38	1 1	2.52
5	13 65	5 20	0 0	3 6	4 4	3.8
6	14 70	9 36	0 0	2 4	0 0	4.4
7	7 35	15 60	1 3	1 2	1 1	4.04

Table 2: Result of Students survey (English 1st paper question)

4.1.1.1 Reading Skill Testing

In first paper questionnaire for the students I have included three questions regarding the reading passage and the tasks under that passage. They are:

Here we can see, for item number 1 “*(Reading passage of question No 1 requires a comprehensive understanding of the passage)*”, 3 students chose “strongly agree”, 17 students chose “agree”, 2 students chose “not sure”, 3 students chose “disagree” and nobody chose “strongly disagree” and therefore the mean score is 3.8. So, according to the interpretation scale most of the students have agreed with the statement.

For item number 2 “*(Tasks under the reading passage match the difficulty level of SSC examination.)*”, 1 student chose for “strongly agree”, 2 students chose “agree”, 4 students chose “not sure”, 16 students chose “disagree” and 3 students selected “strongly disagree” and therefore the mean score is 2.4.

Most of the students who have disagreed with this statement think that the tasks are too much easy to match the difficulty level of this stage. Only two of the students who have disagreed with this statement thinks that tasks under the reading passage are difficult than their

For item number 3 “*(Tasks under the reading passage should have different varieties of items instead of always following the same pattern of questioning)*”, 10 students selected “strongly agree”, 4 students chose “agree”, 2 students chose “not sure”, 7 students chose

“disagree” and 2 students selected “strongly disagree” and therefore the mean score is 3.52.

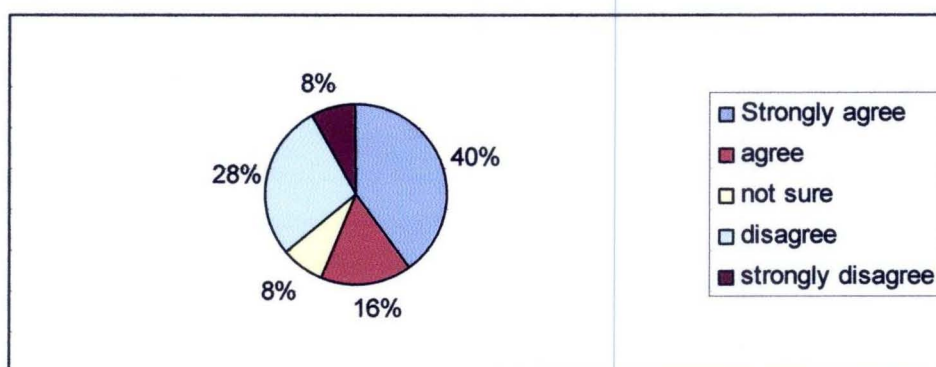


Chart 1: Reading tasks

One student wrote that “we want variety in the tasks because then it will be interesting in doing those” another student wrote that, “the same tasks under the reading passage make the question paper very monotonous and it does not offer us anything new.”

4.1.1.2 Vocabulary Testing

For item number 4 (*For Part B) (vocabulary testing 9 & 10), practicing all of the previous board questions is a good way because there is a strong possibility of getting the same questions again*), 2 students chose “strongly agree”, 2 students chose “agree”, 2 students chose “not sure”, 18 students selected “disagree” and 1 student chose “strongly disagree” and therefore the mean score is 2.52.

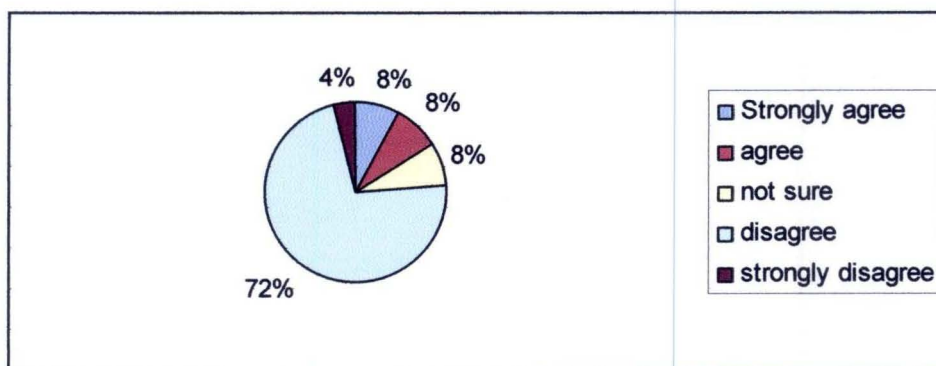


Chart 2: Vocabulary Testing

One of the students who have chosen “disagree” writes that, “Though there can be strong possibility of getting common if we practice the board questions but it really does not help us to improve our vocabulary. That’s why I prefer to practice more than the board questions.”

4.1.1.3 Matching and Rearrangement

For item number 5 (*For question number 11(matching) and 12 (rearrangement) students can get “common” if they sincerely practice all of the board questions.*), 13 students selected “strongly agree”, 5 students chose “agree”, no body has chosen “not sure”, 3 students chose for “disagree” and 4 students went for “strongly disagree” and therefore the mean score is 3.8. Here we can see that, most of them have agreed that they mainly practice the previous board questions for “matching” and “rearrangement”.

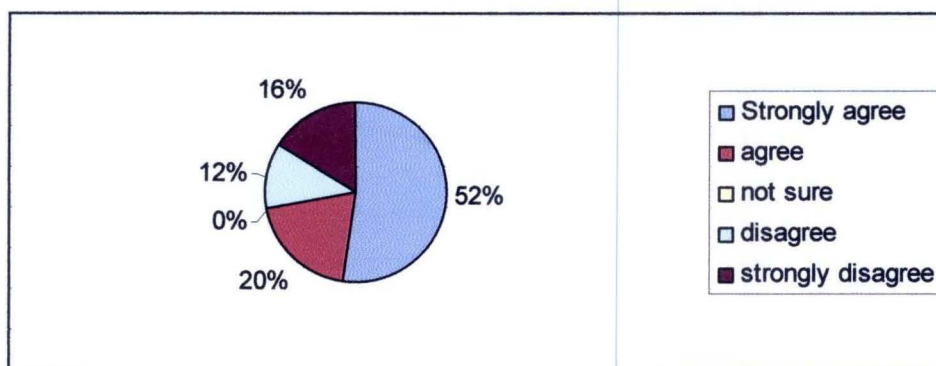


Chart 3: Rearrangement & Matching

4.1.1.4 Composition Testing

For item number 6 (*In SSC examination the paragraph and composition writing is merely a memory testing*), 14 students chose “strongly agree”, 9 students chose “agree”, 0 student chose “not sure”, 2 students chose “disagree” and nobody selected “strongly disagree” and therefore the mean score is 4.4. Here we can see that, 23 students have selected for agree and strongly agree. So we can interpret this, In SSC examination writing test is really only a mere memory testing.

For item number 7 (*Topics of the paragraph, letter and composition writing should be changed.*), 7 students chose “strongly agree”, 15 students chose “agree”, 1 student chose “not sure”, 1 student selected “disagree” and 1 student chose “strongly disagree” and therefore the mean score is 4.04.

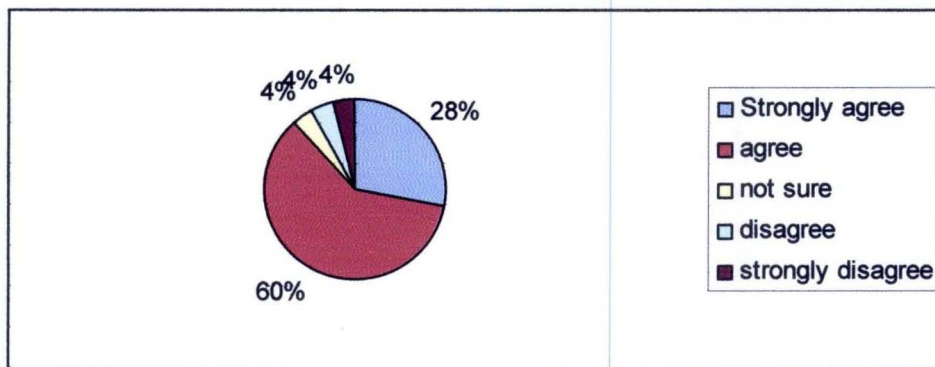


Chart 4: Topics of the composition Testing

This is something really interesting result that survey conductor has found in this survey that, almost 22 students want to get rid from the traditional topics of paragraph writing. They have also mentioned in comment option that, “We want different topics instead of writing newspaper, journey by boat etc over and over again.” One student who has chosen “strongly disagree” wrote that changing in the topic will make the question paper difficult.

For item number 7 (*If I ask you to rate English 1st paper question in a 10 point scale how much will you give?*), 4 students have rated 9.5, 2 students rated 9, 7 students have rated 8, 8 students have rated 7-7.5, 2 students have rated 6 and 2 students have rated below 5.

4.1.2 Teachers survey for English 1st paper question

4.1.2.1 Reading Passage and Reading tasks

For question No 1, 3 teachers have chosen “board questions of the previous years”, 1 teacher chose for “difficult passages from English for Today book”, 5 teachers have chosen “most widely read passages” and 1 teacher selected “others (please specify)”

According to the teacher who has chosen “others”, “passages which most of the students think are unimportant for the examination, I would like to select them for the final question paper so that we can reduce the tendency of students to read only some selected passages.”

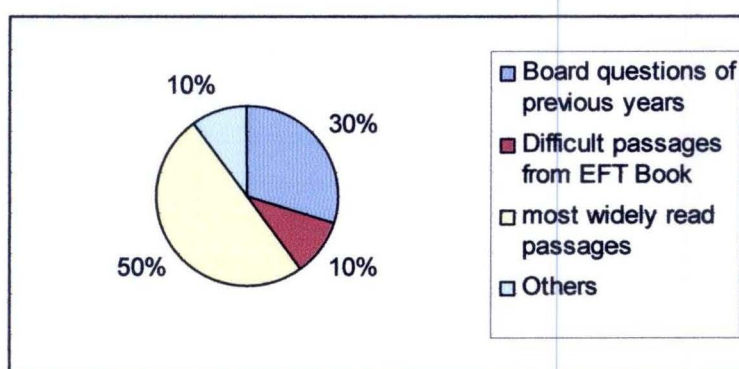


Chart 5: Reading Passage (Teacher's survey) item no 1

For item no 2 (*For the questions of the fill in the blanks, rearranging, matching etc are being repeated in the SSC exam because*), 6 teachers have chosen “most of the students can do well in the examination”, 3 teachers have chosen “students do not get confused

seeing totally unknown questions”, 1 teacher has chosen “preparing a totally new question is time consuming” and nobody chose “others”.

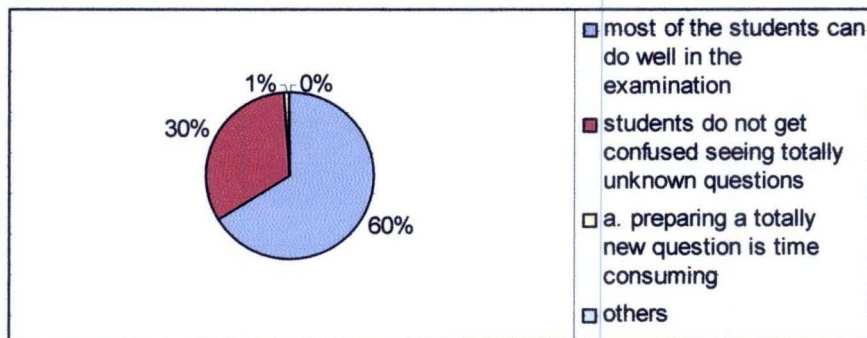


Chart 6: Reading passage (Item no 2)

For item number 3 (*Tasks related to the reading passages are adequate enough to test the reading skill of the students.*), 2 teachers have chosen “strongly agree”, 4 teachers have chosen “agree”, 1 teacher has chosen “not sure”, 2 teachers selected “disagree” 1 teacher has chosen “strongly disagree”. One teacher who has chosen “strongly agree” wrote that, “It may seem that tasks are easy for SSC level but teachers who prepare these questions have to keep in mind students all over the country”

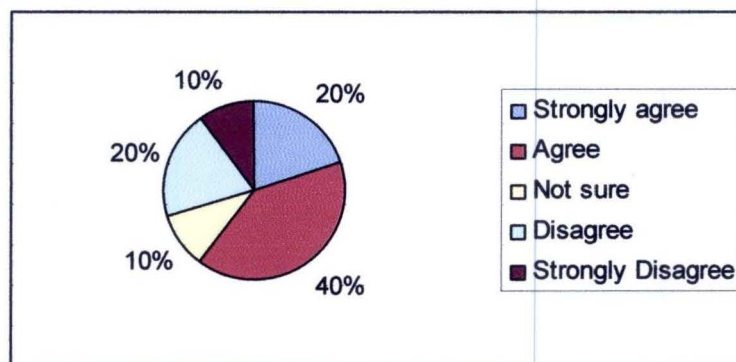


Chart 7: Reading Passage (Item 3)

4.1.2.2 Matching & Rearrangement

For item no 4 (*For questions like matching and rearranging students can get questions which they have practiced ("common") if they sincerely practice all of the board questions.*), 2 teachers chose "strongly agree", 3 teachers have chosen "agree", 4 teachers have chosen "not sure", 1 teacher selected "disagree" and nobody chose "strongly disagree". One teacher who has chosen "not sure" wrote that "sometimes this may not happen. For example, students found rearrangements in the SSC exams in 2008 and 2010 under Dhaka board quite new and difficult either because of lack of clear sequence or for uncommon vocabulary"

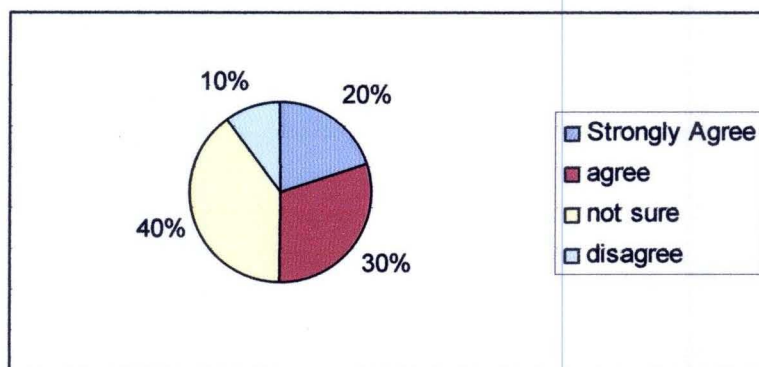


Chart 8: matching & rearrangement (item no 4)

4.1.2.3 Composition Testing

For item no 5 (*In your opinion, in the SSC examination, for paragraph, composition and letter writing what do most of the students do?*), 2 teachers have chosen "use their creativity and write the writing tasks by their own", 7 teachers selected "memorize the writing items and write those in the examination script", 1 teacher has chosen "practice different types of writing at home" and no body chose "none of the above".

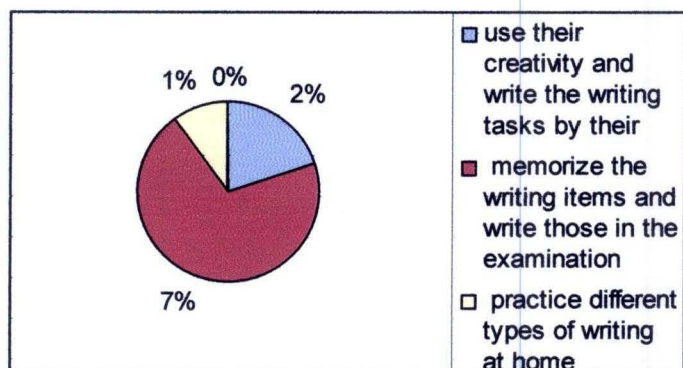


Chart 8 Story writing (Item no 5)

For Item No 6 (*“Topics of the paragraph, letter and composition writing should be changed”*), 1 teacher has chosen “strongly agree”, 3 teachers selected “agree”, 1 teacher chose “not sure”, 4 teachers have chosen “disagree” and 1 teacher chose “strongly disagree”. One teacher who has chosen “strongly agree” wrote in the comment option that, “Conventional topics in the examination encourage students to memorize things. If the topics had been chosen from our daily life like importance of SSC examination students would have tried to learn how to write them of their own.” Teachers, who have chosen “disagree” or “strongly disagree” have shown more or less the same reason like one of them has written “Conventional topics can easily reach students of every level. By that I mean, you can not expect from a student who studies in a school of a remote village to write any unseen paragraph.”

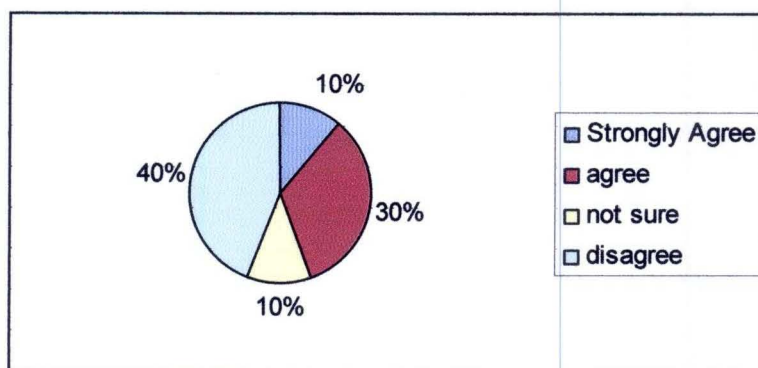
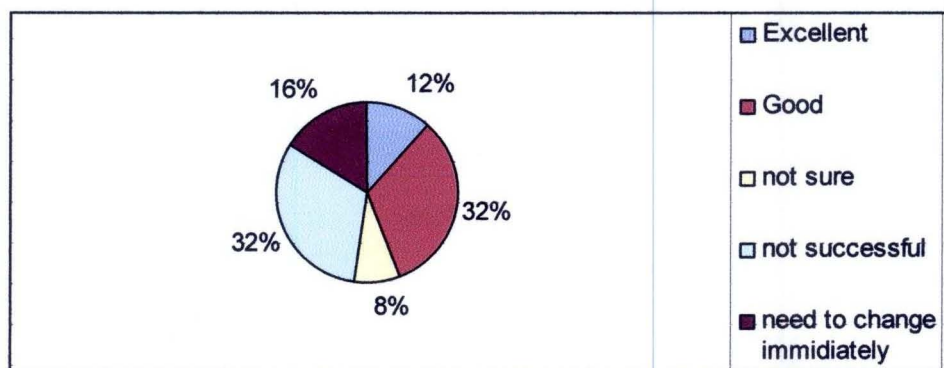


Chart 9: composition writing (Item No 6)

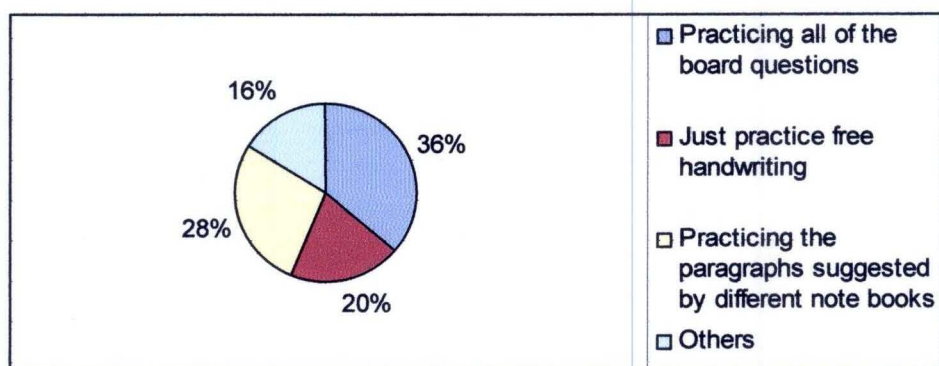
For question no 7, 3 teachers have rated 5, 2 teachers have rated 6, 2 teachers have rated 7, 1 has rated 7.5 and 2 teachers have given 8.5 marks for the question paper of English 1st paper examination.

4.1.3 Students Survey of English 2nd paper question

For question No 1 (*How successful Part A grammar testing is to test the grammar skills of students?*), 3 students have chosen “Excellent”, 8 students have chosen “good”, 2 students have chosen “not sure”, 8 students have chosen “not successful”, and 4 students have chosen “need to change immediately.” One student who has chosen “need to change immediately” wrote that, “It does not improve our grammar skill that is why it should be changed immediately.”

Chart 10: English 2nd paper Student's survey (item no 1)

For question no 2 (*What is the most preferable strategy for you to do well in paragraph writing?*), 9 students have chosen “practicing all of the board questions”, 5 students have chosen “Just practice free hand writing”, 7 students have chosen “Practicing the paragraphs suggested by different note books”, and 4 students selected “Others”. Students who have chosen others wrote different reasons like, “practicing paragraphs which their schools follow” and “both free handwriting and board questions.”

Chart 11: English 2nd paper Student's survey (item no 2)

For item No 3 (*How many students memorize the writing items (paragraph, composition, letter application) to do well in the examination?*), 12 students have chosen “80%-100%”, 7 students have chosen “60%-80%” 5 students go for “40%-60%”, 1 students chose “less than 40%”. One student who has chosen “80%-100%” wrote that, “as we can easily get common question if we memorize some selected paragraphs suggested by teachers, most of the students memorize the paragraphs and other writing items.”

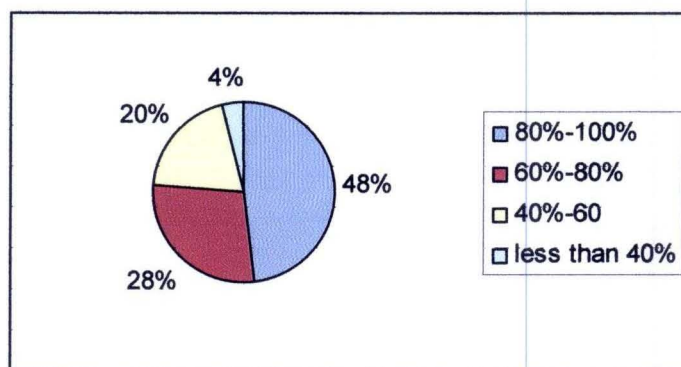


Chart 13: English 2nd paper Student's survey (item no 3)

For item no 4 (*The Topics of the writing items (paragraph, composition, letter application) need to be changed immediately*), 10 students have chosen “strongly agree”, 8 students have chosen “agree”, nobody goes for “not sure”, 5 students chosen “disagree”, 2 students selected “strongly disagree”. One student who has chosen “strongly agree” wrote that “Topics of the writing items are getting so much boring.”

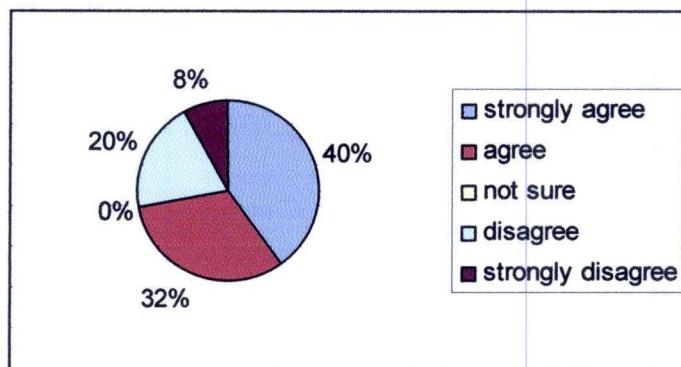


Chart 14: English 2nd paper Student's survey (item no 4)

For item no 5 (*Which part of the English 2nd paper question you find interesting?*), 8 students chose "Part A (Grammar)", 10 students chose "Part B (Composition)", 3 students have chosen "Both A & B", and 4 students have chosen "none of the part". One student who has chosen "Part A (Grammar)" wrote that "it's interesting because we even have the chance to get full marks in this portion". On the other hand one student who has chosen "Part B (Composition)" wrote that "I found it interesting because we do not need to study that much to get good marks in composition section." Moreover another student who has chosen "none of the part" wrote that, "none of the part seems interesting to me."

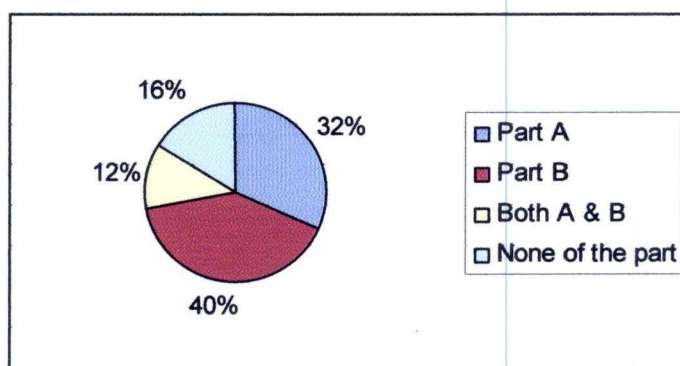


Chart 15: English 2nd paper Student's survey (item no 5)

For question No 6 (*Instead of giving some single sentences to test grammar it is more meaningful and easier to do grammar exercises related to a particular passage*), 6 students have chosen “strongly agree”, 8 students have chosen “agree”, 2 students go for “not sure”, 6 students have chosen “disagree” and 3 students have chosen “strongly disagree”. One student who goes for “agree” wrote that “Because it may be interesting.” Another one has commented, “By present grammar testing teacher can easily understand whether the student know the exact rule or not that’s why I disagree with the statement”.

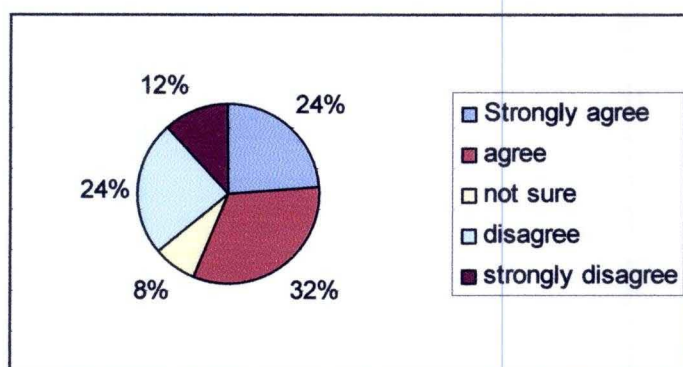
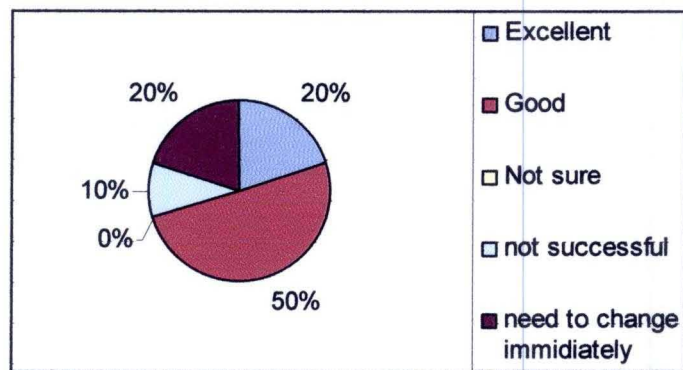


Chart 16: English 2nd paper Student’s survey (item no 6)

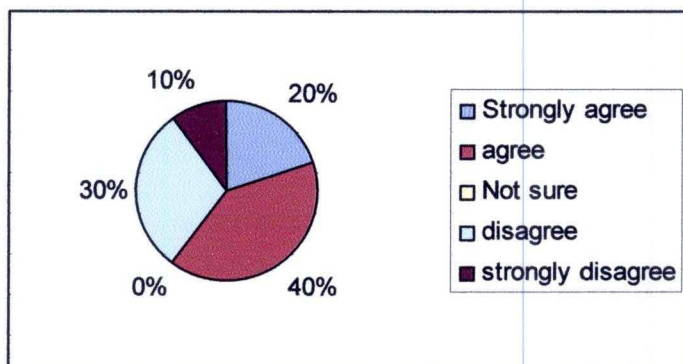
For question No 7, 4 students have marked 5, 6 students have marked 5, 7 students have marked 7-7.5, 5 students have marked 8, 3 students have marked 9.

4.1.4 Teachers survey for English 2nd paper question

For item no 1, 2 teachers have chosen “Excellent”, 5 teachers have chosen “good”, nobody goes for “not sure”, 1 teacher has chosen for “not successful” and 2 teachers have selected “need to change immediately”. One teacher who has chosen “Good” wrote that, “Grammar testing in SSC examination is perfectly alright”.

Chart 17: English 2nd paper teacher's survey (item no 1)

For Item No 2, 2 teachers have chosen “strongly agree”, 4 teachers have chosen “agree” 3 teachers go for “disagree” and 1 teacher goes for “strongly disagree”.

Chart 18: English 2nd paper teacher's survey (item no 2)

For item No 3, 7 teachers have chosen “80%-100%”, 2 teachers have chosen 60%-80% and 1 teacher selected “40%-60%”

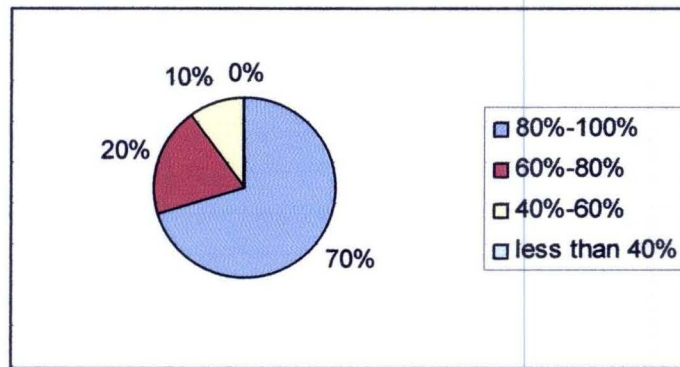


Chart 19: English 2nd paper teacher's survey (item no 3)

For item no 4 (*In “story writing” what do you value most?*) 6 teachers have chosen “grammatical sense of the students”, 2 teachers have chosen “creativity of the students” and 1 teacher selected “organization of the story” and no body chose “the length of the story”.

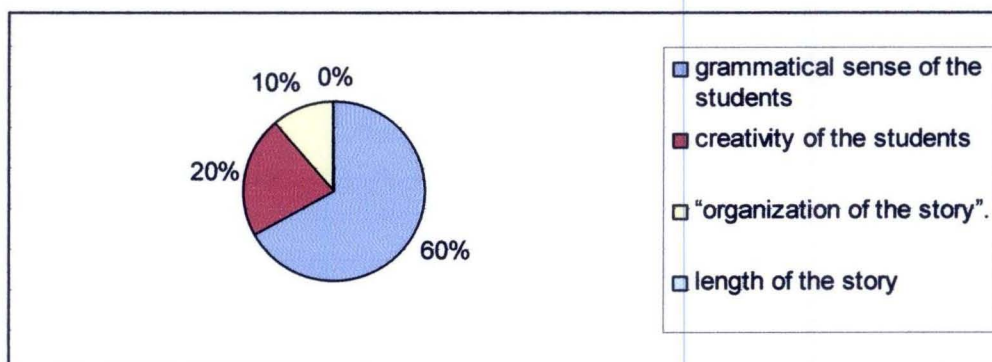


Chart 20: English 2nd paper teacher's survey (item no 4)

For item no 5 (*In your opinion which part of the questions need to change?*), 4 teachers have chosen “Part A(Grammar)”, 2 teachers have chosen “Part B (Comprehension)”, 4 Teachers have chosen “Both A & B” and none of them go for “None of the part”.

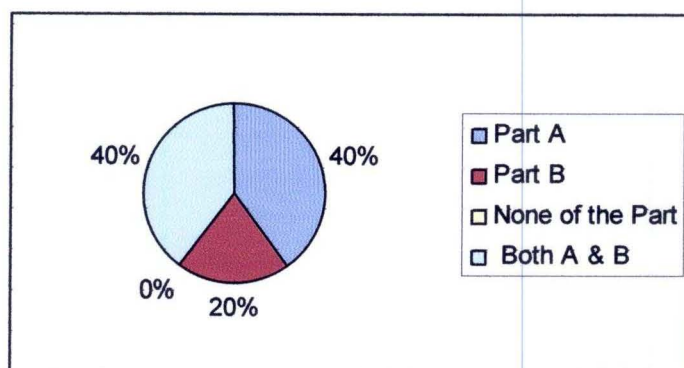


Chart 21: English 2nd paper teacher's survey (item no 5)

4.2 Analysis of the English Question Paper of 2012:

4.2.1 English 1st paper question:

4.2.1.1 Part A

Reading Passage.

In this year the reading passage was about “The National Memorial” which has 290 words. The passage is directly given from *English For Today* book. So here students are not getting any thing new in the examination hall.

1. MCQ items:

Under the reading passage there are five MCQ items but none of the items need deep understanding of the passage. The lines even the correct answers have been directly quoted from the passage. Students can answer correctly if they have just go through the text.

For example, in 2012,

1. The National Memorial represents _____

- i. honor and dignity of the people
- ii. Valiant struggle and supreme sacrifices
- iii. Warning to oppressors
- iv. Nation's respect for the martyrs

In the passage the line is written as "The National Memorial at Savar is a symbol of the nation's respect".

2. True false:

In this item students not only find out whether the statements are true or false but also they have to give the correct answer if it is false. I think this is quite a valid way of constructing "true false" because students who will go for guessing the answer will be in trouble because they have to give correct answer.

3. Fill in the gaps (with clues and without clues)

The theme of the fill in the gaps is same as the reading passage. But here students are given different words or in different format and students have to fill the gaps with those given word.

4. Paragraph writing:

In this item students have to write a paragraph on a topic related to the reading text and students have to use some given words for this writing. I think this is a very interesting item because here students will get the chance to interpret the reading text.

5. Question Answer:

To answer the question of this section students have to thoroughly read the passage. The questions are basically opinion based and students have to write it in their own words.

Here students have to write the answers in their own words.

6. Summary Writing:

Students have to write the main ideas of the passage in their own words.

7. Vocabulary Testing;

For vocabulary testing students have to do two “fill in the gaps” items. Among them in one item students have to choose words from the given words and in another one students have to select their own words. The items of the vocabulary testing are supposed to be unseen items.

8. Matching:

This item is supposed to be unseen but as we have seen in the survey most of the students only practice the board question. Here there will be three columns and students have to match the three columns.

9. Rearrangement:

Here students have to organize or rearrange the given sentences in a correct order.

10. Composition testing:

Here students have to write a paragraph and a composition or a letter. The topics of these three items were supposed to be unseen but unfortunately in Bangladesh the same topic are being repeated in the examination. So, as the most of the students and teachers have chosen topics are getting boring and writing test is being a mere memory testing in SSC examination.

Here I think, the reading tasks are quite interesting to have a proper testing of the reading skills. The only point I think needs to be changed is the reading passage. It should be something new, the topic can be same but the passage should be something new because otherwise it will be difficult for the testers to judge whether students have memorized the passage from the book or not.

4.2.2 English 2nd paper Question Paper:

Part A

Grammar testing

In English 2nd Paper examination the following grammar items are being tested:

1. Right form of the verb
2. Article
3. Preposition
4. Idioms & phrases
5. Narration
6. Transformation of Sentences
7. Tag Questions
8. Complete the following sentences

Part B

Composition:

9. **Paragraph writing:** Students have to write a paragraph on a given topic. As most of the students and teachers have responded that topics of the paragraph writing are being repeated so frequently that most of the students memorize some common paragraphs of board questions. By analyzing all of the board questions from 2007 - 2012, I have found that only 17 topics for paragraph writing is being repeated and if

a students memorizes all of these 17 paragraphs, there is a high possibility that s/he will get common topics in the examination. Those 17 paragraphs are:

- 1) Traffic jam
- 2) A rickshaw Puller
- 3) A winter Morning
- 4) Tree Plantation
- 5) Your National flag
- 6) Load Shedding
- 7) A school magazine
- 8) Your visit to Dhaka city
- 9) Deforestation
- 10) Your visit to a book fair
- 11) A street hawker
- 12) A rainy day
- 13) The life of a fisher man
- 14) Street accident
- 15) The life of a farmer
- 16) Your mother
- 17) 21st February

Among all of these topics only three topics are not repeated yet. They are: Your mother, 21st February and Deforestation. The topics themselves are boring to all the students (as we have seen in survey) and students want something interesting for their topics. So, here we can see, paragraph writing which was supposed to

test the creativity and the writing skill of the students, is only testing the memorization power of the students.

10. Composition Writing:

The situation of the composition writing is quite similar with the paragraph writing. From 2007- 2012 the topic of the paragraph writing is only being limited within the twenty topics. They are:

- 1) The population Problem
- 2) Game you like most
- 3) Journey you like most
- 4) Computer
- 5) The duties of the students
- 6) Television
- 7) Visit to a place of Historical importance
- 8) Your future plan
- 9) The season you like most
- 10) Your hobby
- 11) Physical Exercises
- 12) Journey by train
- 13) Importance of Reading newspaper
- 14) Fruits of Bangladesh
- 15) Science in everyday life

16) A visit to a village fair

17) Childhood Memories

18) Importance of Trees

19) Corruption

20) Child Labor

Among these twenty topics only “Corruption” and “Child Labor” have not been repeated yet. Most interesting part is, in composition writing students will have to choose one out of two. So, there is a high possibility that students will get at least one “common” topic if they memorize all of these compositions and most of the students do exactly the same thing.

11. Application Writing:

For Application writing the situation is quite similar just like other writing items. Here fourteen topics for application writing are being repeated among all of the boards. They are:

- 1) Application for setting Canteen
- 2) Application for short leave
- 3) Application for a testimonial
- 4) Application for English Language lab
- 5) Application for distribution of medical aid
- 6) Application for sinking a tube well
- 7) Application for establishing a debating club
- 8) Application for study tour
- 9) Application for establishing a computer club

10) Application for getting admission in the school

11) Application for a school hostel

12) Application for library facilities in the school

13) Application for to repair a damaged road

12. Dialogue Writing or Summary Writing: Here students have to choose either dialogue writing or summary writing. Sometimes the test taker gives dialogue writing or summary writing from English for Today book

13. Story Completion: This is an unseen item where student has to complete an incomplete story.

Chapter 5

Recommendation:

This Chapter will include some suggestion of the survey conductor regarding different items in both English 1st paper and English 2nd paper questions to make the testing more efficient and also some possible solution to overcome the difficulties.

5.1 Recommendation for English 1st Paper question

1. To avoid difficulties regarding reading passage test takers can use authentic passages so that students can deal with something new in the exam hall and that is how testing the reading skill will be more efficient. Another point that I want to suggest is that, if we really want to follow the passages from English For Today book then teachers should not follow some selected ones. More over I would also like to suggest that instead of giving totally known passages from the book, teachers can different passages of the same topic. That is how teachers not only offering something new in examination hall but also it will not scare the students by seeing something totally different.
2. Teachers should definitely ensure some variations among the tasks to make the question paper interesting and both challenging for the students. Moreover, it is seen that, tasks under the reading passages are so easy that most of the students do not

even read the passage properly. That is why I would suggest more difficult task to test the reading skill of the students.

3. For vocabulary testing, I will suggest not to repeat board questions because it only increases the memorization tendency of the students. Instead of repeating the same board questions, teachers can use new and different passages for fill in the gaps. Moreover, I would also like to suggest that, instead of giving fill in the blanks as the vocabulary testing teachers can use other different vocabulary tasks to test the vocabulary skill of the students.
4. As most of the students and teachers have suggested repetition of the same paragraph, composition and other writing items will increase the memorization tendency of the students. I will suggest that topics of the writing items should be related to real life salutations which are faced by students all over the country. Just by memorization we really can not evaluate students' writing skill. By giving different topics for different writing tasks students will not only be creative but also it will help them to develop their writing skill in real life situation.

5.2 Recommendation for English 2nd Paper

5. I think instead of giving some decontextualized grammar sentences teachers should give grammar tasks with a context because in real life sentences never occur without any context. Moreover, by doing this not only grammar items in the

examination will be interesting but also it will discourage students to memorize single sentences for grammar tasks.

6. I would also like to give suggestion in the evaluation of “Story writing” part where most of the teachers value the grammar skill most. I think in case of story writing the main concern should be the organization of the story and creativity of the story. As in English 2nd paper question there is big part where only grammar skill is being tested, in case of evaluating “story writing” creativity and organization should have maximum priority.
7. In English 2nd paper examination the paragraphs and compositions are continuously being repeated in the examination. So, I think teachers who prepare the questions should get out of it and give some interesting and real life topics for testing writing skills.
8. In none of these papers, listening skills and speaking skills are being tested. This is the main reason why most of the Bangla medium student’s listening and speaking skills do not develop along with their other two skills. So, I think listening and speaking skills testing should be included in language testing in secondary level.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

This chapter will give the reader an overall summary of the research and also discuss the research questions.

6.1 Summary of the Research

In each year the number of GPA 5 holders in English in secondary level is increasing. Now the question has arisen whether the quality of students have increased or the quality of our testing language has decreased that students are finding it so easy to get A+ in English in secondary level. Unfortunately through all the survey and the analysis we have seen that, still now Language testing in secondary level is merely memory testing because of some problems in preparing the items of the test. It is really good news that our students and most of our teachers are aware of this fact but they can not do anything against the system. So, if we want to get rid of this memory testing Language test and make our language test better and valid, we should prepare our students from the very childhood.

6.2 Research questions

- 1. What perception do the students bear regarding the English question paper in SSC examination?**

This result is the most interesting result that the survey conductor has found while conducting the research. Most of the participants of the students' survey are really concerned regarding the English question paper, may be not explicitly. They even have this conception that how this question paper is encouraging memorization and also how far it is from any real life situation. The only problem they are facing is they really can not do anything came out of the system. The vpoint, which most of the students have tried to establish through their thoughtful comments is both the English 1st paper question and 2nd paper question need to be developed in a more interesting way and related to real life language use.

2. What problems do the teachers face to make both English 1st paper and English 2nd paper question more interesting?

I have done this survey from teachers of three different schools in Dhaka city. Interestingly one of the common problems that many teachers have mentioned in their comment portion is that they have to consider students from all over the country and level of English of the SSC students all over the country is not the same. That is why the question may seem very easy to some students and very difficult for some other students. When I have asked why topics of writing items are continuously being repeated in SSC examination, they responded that if they introduce anything new in the examination most of the students in remote places will not do well, even it has been seen that in 2010 “matching” and “rearrangement” sections were quite new for

the students but at that year failure in English 2nd paper examination was also greater than the previous years.

3. Why both English 1st paper and 2nd paper questions in SSC examination are far behind from CLT fashion and still somehow following the examination pattern of Grammar translation Method?

We have text books which has been designed following CLT (English for Today) and even teachers are supposed to design English 1st paper and 2nd paper questions in CLT fashion but it's really not practically happening in our country. One of important reason can be, though books are designed in a CLT fashion teachers really do not follow CLT in classroom. That is why still question paper of the final examination is not really following CLT. Moreover, what most of the teachers have pointed out is that, level of English of students of remote villages is not the same like students from Dhaka city. So, if they totally follow the unseen pattern of questions, these students of remote villages will not do well.

4. How to improve Language Testing in SSC level in Bangladesh?

To make the language testing in SSC level more effective we badly need to change the question pattern of SSC examination. We should really try to make it more closer to real life situation specially what most of the teachers and students have pointed out is that, we should really improve the writing part of both English 1st paper and 2nd paper test and

grammar testing because present tests are really not testing what it supposed to test. So, there is a question of validity of the test is arising. That is why to make the question paper more valid and result we get from this more reliable we should improve the question pattern.

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Appendix

Survey questions for students

About the survey: I am conducting this survey as a part of my thesis which is on “Evaluation of the English question paper of SSC examination”. It will be really helpful for me if you cooperate with me and provide your thoughtful responses.

Thank you!

Survey questions for students

Class:

Year of SSC:

English 1st paper:

1. *“Reading passage of question No 1 requires a comprehensive understanding of the passage”*

a. strongly agree b. agree c. not sure d. disagree e. strongly disagree

Comments:

2. *“Tasks under the reading passage match the difficulty level of SSC examination.”*

a. strongly agree b. agree c. not sure d. disagree e. strongly disagree

Comments:

3. *“Tasks under the reading passage should have different varieties of items instead of always following the same pattern of questioning”*

a. strongly agree b. agree c. not sure d. disagree e. strongly disagree

Comments:

4. *For Part B (vocabulary testing 9 & 10), practicing the all of the previous board questions is a good way because there is a strong possibility of getting the same questions again"*

a. strongly agree b. agree c. not sure d. disagree e. strongly disagree

Comments:

5. *For question number 11(matching) and 12 (rearrangement) students can get "common" if they sincerely practice all of the board questions.*

a. strongly agree b. agree c. not sure d. disagree e. strongly disagree

Comments:

6. *"In SSC examination the paragraph and composition writing is merely a memory testing"*

a. strongly agree b. agree c. not sure d. disagree e. strongly disagree

Comments:

7. *"Topics of the paragraph, letter and composition writing should be changed".*

a. strongly agree b. agree c. not sure d. disagree e. strongly disagree

Comments:

8. *If I ask you to rate English 1st paper question in a 10 point scale how much will you give?*

Ans: _____

English 2nd paper question

1. *How successful Part A grammar testing is to test the grammar skills of students?*

- a. **Excellent** b. **good** c. **not sure** d. **not successful** e. **need to change immediately**

2. *What is the most preferable strategy for you to do well in paragraph writing?*

- a. **Practicing all of the board questions**
b. **Just practice free hand writing**
c. **Practicing the paragraphs suggested by different note books**
d. **Others (Please specify)**
-

3. *How many students memorize the writing items (paragraph, composition, letter application) to do well in the examination?*

- a. **80%-100%** b. **60-80%** c. **40-60%** d. **less than 40%**

4. *"The Topics of the writing items (paragraph, composition, letter application) need to be changed immediately"*

- a. **strongly agree** b. **agree** c. **not sure** d. **disagree** e. **strongly disagree**

Comments:

5. *Which part of the English 2nd paper question you find interesting?*

a. Part A(Grammar):**Why:**

b. Part B (Composition)**Why:**

c. Both A & B**Why:**

d. None of the part**Why:**

6. *"Instead of giving some single sentences to test grammar it is more meaningful and easier to do grammar exercises related to a particular passage."*

a. strongly agree b. agree c. not sure d. disagree e. strongly disagree

Comments:

7. *If I ask you to rate English 1st paper question in a 10 point scale how much will you give?*

Ans: _____

Survey Questions for Teachers

About the survey: I am conducting this survey as a part of my thesis which is on “Evaluation of the English question paper of SSC examination”. It will be really helpful for me if you cooperate with me and provide your thoughtful responses.

Thank you!

Survey Questions for Teachers**Year of experience:****English 1st paper**

1. *What is the main strategy that you follow while selecting the passage for reading comprehension?*

- a. board questions of the previous years
 - b. difficult passages from English for Today book
 - c. most widely read passages
 - d. others (please specify)
-

2. *For the questions of the fill in the blanks, rearranging, matching etc are being repeated in the SSC exam because*

- a. most of the students can do well in the examination
 - b. students do not get confused seeing totally unknown questions
 - c. preparing a totally new question is time consuming
 - d. others (Please specify)
-
-

3. *Tasks related to the reading passages are adequate enough to test the reading skill of the students.*

a. strongly agree b. agree c. not sure d. disagree e. strongly disagree

Comments:

4. For questions like matching and rearranging students can get questions which they have practiced ("common") if they sincerely practice all of the board questions.

a. strongly agree b. agree c. not sure d. disagree e. strongly disagree

Comments:

5. In your opinion, in the SSC examination, for paragraph, composition and letter writing what do most of the students do?

- a. use their creativity and write the writing tasks by their own**
- b. memorize the writing items and write those in the examination script**
- c. practice different types of writing at home**
- d. None of the above.**

6. "Topics of the paragraph, letter and composition writing should be changed".

a. strongly agree b. agree c. not sure d. disagree e. strongly disagree

Comments:

7. If I ask you to rate English 1st paper question in a 10 point scale how much will you give?

Ans: _____

English 2nd paper

1. *How successful Part A grammar testing is to test the grammar skills of students?*

- b. Excellent b. good c. not sure d. not successful e. need to change immediately**

2. *“Instead of giving some single sentences to test grammar it is more meaningful and easier to do grammar exercises related to a particular passage.”*

- a. strongly agree b. agree c. not sure d. disagree e. strongly disagree**

Comments:

3. *How many students memorize the writing items (paragraph, composition, letter application) to do well in the examination?*

- b. 80%-90% b. 60-80% c. 40-60% d. less than 50%**

4. *In “story writing” what do you value most?*

- a. grammatical sense of the students
b. creativity of the students
c. length of the story
d. organization of the story**

Comments:

5. *In your opinion which part of the questions need to change?*

e. Part A(Grammar):

Reason:

f. Part B (Composition)

Reason:

g. Both A & B

Reason:

h. None of the part

Reason:

Sample of Board Questions of English Language

ENGLISH FIRST PAPER

DHAKA BOARD — 2012

ENGLISH (COMPULSORY) FIRST PAPER -

Part A : Reading Test (40 Marks)

Read the passage carefully and answer the following questions.

[Unit—14; Lesson—1(B)]

The National Memorial at Savar is a symbol of the nation's respect for the martyrs of the War of Liberation.

It is built with concrete, but made of blood. It stands 150 feet tall, but every martyr it stands to stand as much taller. It is an achievement the dimensions of which can be measured, but it stands as an achievement which is immeasurable. It stands as a monument for the millions of martyrs who laid down their lives so that we may stand tonight in honour and dignity amongst the nations of the world.

Also prominently visible is the 150 feet tower that stands on a base measuring 150 feet wide. There is actually a series of 7 towers that rise by stages to a height of 150 feet. The foundation was laid on the first anniversary of the Victory Day. There is actually a plan to build a huge complex in several phases. The entire complex will cover an area of 125 acres. The plan of this complex includes a museum, a library and a museum. The relics of the Liberation War will be kept in the museum. They will ever remind our countrymen and all who would come to visit the museum of the valiant struggle and supreme sacrifice of a freedom loving people. Every day will be a clear warning to all oppressors that the weapons of freedom need not be very big, and that oppressors will always be defeated. The will of a people prevails, for man is born to be free. The most moving sight of the complex is the several graves of the martyrs of the Language Movement. One of the towers standing in front of the graves we bow down our heads in respect as the towers stand up symbolizing the defiance of their spirit.

1. Choose the best answer from the alternatives.

1x5=5

- (a) The National Memorial represents —
 (i) honour and dignity of the people
 (ii) valiant struggle and supreme sacrifices
 (iii) warning to oppressors
 (iv) nation's respect for the martyrs
- (b) The foundation of the National Memorial was laid on —
 (i) December 16, 1971
 (ii) December 16, 1972
 (iii) March 26, 1971
 (iv) March 26, 1972
- (c) Spiritually the National Memorial is made of —
 (i) concrete
 (ii) tiles
 (iii) iron
 (iv) blood
- (d) The National Memorial at Savar reminds us of the — of our people.
 (i) unity and sincerity
 (ii) honesty and truthfulness
 (iii) bravery and patriotism
 (iv) charity and sacrifice
- (e) The National Memorial is an inspiration to the —
 (i) freedom loving people of Bangladesh
 (ii) oppressors
 (iii) martyrs of the Language Movement
 (iv) martyrs of the War of Liberation

2. Write whether the statements are true or false. If false, give the correct answer. 1x5=5

- (a) The mental strength of our martyrs are indomitable.
 (b) The huge complex of the National Memorial will be built at a time.
 (c) The weapons of freedom need not be very big.
 (d) The towers of the memorial represent the war heroes of the Liberation War.
 (e) Suppressors always come out victorious.

3. Fill in each gap in the following passage with a suitable word from the box. There are more words than necessary. -5x10=5

gratitude	liberation	martyrs	dedicated	heroic	countrymen
oppressions	identity	represents	message	indication	fearlessly

The National Memorial located at Savar (a) — for the nation's respect towards the (b) — of Liberation War. It reminds us of those heroes who (c) — their lives for the (d) — of their motherland. Our hearts are filled with pride and (e) — for the valiant sons of the soil for their (f) — deeds. The National Memorial standing upright tells us to live (g) — with dignity. Love the country, love the (h) — and hate all sorts of (i) — and repressions is the (j) — for us given by the National Memorial.

4. Read the passage in 'A' again. Now, write a paragraph based on the information about 'The National Memorial' at Savar. Use the clues in the box below. Write the information in the correct sequence as it appears in the text. The paragraph should not exceed 70 words. 5

symbolic	honour	sacrifice	pride	threat	spirit	prevails
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776

SSC English Test Papers with Suggestions

5. Read the passage in 'A' again. Now, answer the following questions in your own words. 1×5=5

- (a) What does the National Memorial signify?
 (b) How did the freedom loving people struggle in the War of Liberation?
 (c) What will the complex include?
 (d) What is the warning to the oppressors?
 (e) What do the visitors feel when they stand in front of the graves?

6. Fill in each gap with a suitable word of your own, based on the information from the text in 'A'. 5×10=5

The National Memorial at Savar (a) — the nation's respect towards the (b) — of Liberation War. It is not (c) — a monument of concrete, it is (d) — than that. The achievement (e) — by the martyrs cannot be (f) —. The (g) — plan of this huge complex (h) — a mosque, a library and a museum (i) — the relics of the Liberation War will be kept for new (j) —.

7. Suppose, you have paid a visit to the National Memorial at Savar recently. Now, write in about 70–80 words about 'The National Memorial'. 58. Read the passage in 'A'. Now, write the main ideas of the passage in your own words in not more than five sentences. 5

Part B: Vocabulary Test (20 Marks)

9. Fill in each gap with a suitable word from the box. There are more words than necessary. 1×10=10

show	superiors	nothing	behaviour	nature	much
form	conduct	rich	sense	disciplined	remains

Good manners (a) — an important part of our education. Our education (b) — incomplete if we don't learn good manners. In our (c) — with others we must (d) — proper respect for them. We should have a (e) — of fitness in our (f) — with others. We should show respect to our (g) —. It is necessary for a (h) — society. Good manners cost us (i) —. So, good manners should be a part of our (j) —.

10. Fill in each gap with suitable words. Use only one word for each gap. 1×10=10

We know that our land is limited. So most of our (a) — try hard all the year round to (b) — more food for themselves but not for their (c) —. The animals can eat (d) — nature grows (e) — the monsoon. There grows a (f) — of green plants and they eat too (g) —. As a result, they (h) — sick in their stomach. On the other (i) — our winter is always rainless and (j) —.

Part C: Writing Test (40 Marks)

11. Read the following table and make ten meaningful sentences. 1×10=10

Health	should	be happy when he is blessed with sound health
It	is	to take proper rest and fresh food
A person	means	always fresh and jolly
He	having	the most valuable asset of a person
We	can	be healthy by eating right diet and taking exercise
A healthy person	have	be aware of the standard of food
		the root of all happiness
		the sound state of body and mind
		wealth
		ill-health cannot enjoy his life

12. Rearrange the following sentences according to the sequence and rewrite them in a paragraph. 1×10=10

- (a) He showed it to his wife.
 (b) However, he picked it up and carried it home.
 (c) The lands yielded him some crops.
 (d) One day he was walking through the fields.
 (e) He thought that it might have been dropped by a passer-by.
 (f) With that he supported his family with difficulty.
 (g) He had a few acres of land.
 (h) So, he always thought how he could add to his income.
 (i) There lived a farmer in a village.
 (j) While walking he came across a purse of gold.

13. Write a paragraph in about 100–120 words on "Tree Plantation" by answering the following questions.

(a) What does tree plantation mean? (b) What is its importance? (c) When should we plant trees? (d) How does it maintain ecological balance? (e) What are the necessary measures to make the tree plantation programme successful?

14. Suppose, you are Anik/Anika living at Dhaka city. You have a friend named Mahi/Mahua and he/she lives at Agrabad, Chittagong. He/She has done a good result in the SSC Examination which makes you greatly impressed.

Now, write a letter to your friend congratulating him/her on his/her brilliant result.

Or, Write a composition in about 200 words about "Your Future Plan of Life." Use the following clues.

— Why is future plan essential — What you want to be — Your plan — Contribution to the society.

ENGLISH SECOND PAPER

DHAKA BOARD — 2012

ENGLISH (COMPULSORY) SECOND PAPER

Part A : Grammar (40 Marks)

1. Complete the following passage with suitable verbs from the list. Put them in correct tenses. Use negatives where necessary. 1×5=5

think	build	believe	bury	go	die	call
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The Egyptians believed that after death people (a) — to another world. They (b) — that people would still need many of the things they had on earth. Their king had many wonderful treasures. They buried those treasures with them. The kings (c) — in the open ground or in graveyards. They buried them in great buildings or tombs (d) — pyramids. These pyramids (e) — out in the deserts.

2. Use articles where necessary. Put a cross (x) where an article is not needed. 5×10=5

(a) — teacher is often compared with (b) — architect. He is called the architect of a nation. He is (c) — light of learning and makes (d) — illiterate people worthy citizens of our country. But it is (e) — matter of regret that (f) — teachers are not held in due respect in our society. They lead (g) — humble life in (h) — midst of (i) — want. Still they keep the light of (j) — education burning in order to remove the darkness of illiteracy and superstitions from the society.

3. Put in suitable prepositions in the blanks. 1×5=5

Polybags are used (a) — many ways. They are particularly used (b) — carrying things and packing. But these bags do not decompose (c) — any rate. So when people throw these bags, they create many problems. These thrown (d) — bags in town and city areas ultimately find ways (e) — drains and sewerage lines.

4. Complete the following sentences with phrases or idioms from the list given in the box below. 1×5=5

off hand	leave no stone unturned	cope with	pave the way
in time	eat a humble pie	tell upon	

- (a) You must — the changing situation.
 (b) The train is running —
 (c) Hard work — our health.
 (d) They — to solve the problem.
 (e) Education — to succeed in life.

5. Rewrite the following sentences in the reported speech. 5

"Have you ever been to Cox's Bazar?" asked Shabab. "No, I have never," replied Labib. "But I desire for visiting the place." "I had an opportunity to visit the sea-beach last year," said Shabab. "Let us go there this week," said Labib.

6. Read the following passage and transform the underlined sentences as directed in the brackets. 1×5=5

(a) People in general are fond of glittering things (Complex). They are the lovers of surface.
 (b) They are concerned with the outer show of things and beings (Active). They do not bother about intrinsic value. (c) Gold is a metal which is very precious (Simple). (d) But there are some other metals looking like gold (Compound). (e) They fade soon and lose their beauty (Simple).

7. Add tag questions to the following sentences. 1×5=5

- (a) The baby is innocent. —?
 (b) Nothing comes out of nothing. —?
 (c) The glass contains little water. —?
 (d) In our class, everybody knows everybody. —?
 (e) The mother rose in her. —?

8. Complete the following sentences. 1×5=5

- (a) He can lend you the money provided —.
 (b) Since they played well —.
 (c) Though he had a lot of well-wishers —.
 (d) Had I seen him once more —.
 (e) Be truthful if you —.

Part B : Composition (60 Marks)

9. Imagine, your school is going to publish a school magazine. Now, write a paragraph on "A School Magazine" answering the following questions. 10

(a) What is a school magazine? (b) How is it published? (c) What does it contain? (d) Who bear the expenditure for the publication of the magazine? (e) What is its usefulness?

10. Write a composition in about 200 words on any one of the following topics. 15
(a) The Duties of a Student; (b) Physical Exercise.
11. Suppose, you are Nahid/Nahida, a student of class X of Nurpur High School. There is no computer club in your school. You feel the necessity of learning it. Now write an application to the headmaster of your school for setting up a computer club in your school. 10
12. Rajib gets up late in the morning. So he cannot complete his lesson in time and his result is bad in the examination. On the other hand Kabir rises early in the morning and learns his lesson. He is doing well in the examination. Now, write a dialogue between Rajib and Kabir about the benefit of early rising. 10
- Or, Write the summary of the following passage. Give a suitable title to it.
Patriotism is a love for country. It is a powerful sentiment and is wholly unselfish and noble. A patriot puts his country first. He can sacrifice even his own life for the sake of his country. His idealism gives him courage and strength. But false patriotism is dangerous. It may teach him to hate men who do not belong to his country; he becomes blind to the virtues of other countries, while even the vices of his own country he tries to praise. Such false patriotism leads to war and sufferings.
13. Read the beginning of the story. It is not complete. Use your imagination to complete it. Give a suitable title to it. 15
Once there lived a poor woodcutter in a village near a jungle. He used to cut wood from the forest and sold in the market. But one day, while cutting wood his axe

