

An Evaluation of the secondary school textbook *English For Today* (class IX-X) in Bangladesh

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A thesis submitted to the Department of English and Humanities in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
BA in English

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Declaration

It is hereby declared that

1. The thesis submitted is my own original work while completing degree at Brac University.
2. The thesis does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.
3. The thesis does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
4. I have acknowledged all main sources of help.

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Approval

The thesis titled “ An evaluation of the secondary school textbook English For Today (class IX-X) in Bangladesh” submitted by Alifa Reza Oishi (16103054) of Summer, 2020 has been accepted as satisfactory in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of BA in English on 2-10-2020.

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Abstract

This study examines the role of the textbook *English for Today* in the context of teaching English in Bangladesh, specifically at the secondary school level (Class IX-X). Textbooks is one of the important elements in teaching, especially in developing countries where resources are difficult to obtain and often teachers are not trained enough to adopt suitable teaching materials. Textbooks are also considered essential for teaching in such contexts as these are systematic, easy to obtain both by teachers and students, developed and reviewed by the experts, published nationally and aligned with the national test. However, adopting a suitable textbook, that offer ample learning opportunities and that are attractive to students and teachers, is very important. This study, qualitative in nature, critically evaluate the textbook *English for Today* (Class IX-X). An evaluation criteria based on the published research of Garinger, 2000 & Miekley 2005 is used to evaluate this textbook. This is supplemented by teachers' and students' opinion. Based on the data I have provided a holistic picture of this widely used textbook. Finally I expect that this study will work as a guideline to make use of the full potential of a good textbook, which will ultimately help teachers and learners at the secondary schools in Bangladesh.

Keywords: ELT, *English For Today*, Class IX-X, CLT.

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List of Acronyms

CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
ELT	English Language Teaching

ELTIP English Language Teaching Improvement Project

EFT English For Today

Chapter 1

Introduction

English in Bangladesh is considered as one of the important vehicles of country's development. Various initiatives have been taken to modernize and uplift the conditions of English teaching in Bangladesh. These include revising the curriculum, adopting various large-scale projects, training teachers, introducing Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) replacing the Grammar Translation Method and introducing ICT in teaching and learning in schools. Among various initiatives to implement CLT in the secondary and higher secondary levels, introducing new textbooks has been one of the important initiatives. The *English For Today* books, as mentioned in the preface of books for various classes, provide opportunities for students to practice language in real life contexts, and various activities are designed in a way that will help learners to develop their communicative skills. Another important aim of introducing new textbooks is that these books provide opportunities for teachers to teach interactively as various interactive and relevant activities are suggested in every unit. However, these books are often criticized for various reasons including lack of focus on literary texts, lack of authentic reading texts, not providing challenging tasks and providing very few opportunities to practice various language skills such as speaking and listening. In the secondary level the *English for Today* book for class IX and X is considered as one of the important books as students who are going to take the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) exam have to read this book. Thus, this study critically evaluates this textbook. I have used various yardsticks to evaluate the book and I have also collected relevant data to support the evaluation. In the next few sections I will provide some contextual information.

1.1 Importance of English Textbook in Grade IX-X

When it comes to teaching a nonnative language, it is necessary to assess the usefulness of the textbook and its content materials. It is a well-established fact that without appropriate resources it is not possible to successfully teach and learn a language in the formal classroom settings as classroom materials provide a guideline for the teachers and also the students. The use of proper materials helps the teachers to make engaging classroom environments. The main textbook for English courses in secondary level is the textbook “*English for Today*”. According to Hossain (2010), EFT is one of the most important materials for secondary level students because this level is very important for students to improve their skills. Secondary level is important as these are the years before entering the profession, the larger and more serious part of the education. Secondary education is an important period for all students as they are at their prime and is very adaptable. It is important to build a foundation during this period as important educational milestones such as SSC, HSC, and University admission exams happen after this. Many students choose to move abroad after this period and it is high time for them to build a basic foundation of the English language. It can be challenging for many students to grasp the concepts of the language after this period. A severe part of the study will continue for our future career over those years.

1.2 English language at Secondary level

Ninth and tenth grade English language textbook for secondary schools in Bangladesh, published in 2000 (Farooqui, 2008). The title of the book is *English for Today*. The book is recommended by the National Curriculum & Textbook Board to be taught in all government and private secondary schools in the country in the ninth and tenth grades. The sub-system of general education comprises government and semi-government schools. The *English for Today* series issued by the National Curriculum and Textbook Board of Bangladesh (NCTB) is mandatory for classes six to twelve in the general education sub-system. These books follow

the communicative approach to Bangladeshi teaching and learning of English. *English for Today* was developed through the English Language Teaching Improvement Project (ELTIP), which is jointly sponsored by the Government of Bangladesh and the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID). According to them, it offers a range of materials including reading texts, dialogues, pictures, diagrams, tasks, and activities. These materials were structured in the four basic language skills-listening, speaking, reading and writing-for learner experience. Moreover, these books include subjects from both national and global perspectives that are thematically, culturally, and linguistically relevant and important to the learners. Adequate grammar elements were often combined with language skills so that the concepts taught and learned in classroom circumstances would easily be translated to real-life use. However, this scenario of using a unified book across the Country does not represent the real story. Students from the urban areas are more drawn to the guidebooks and question banks and students from the rural areas do not have that opportunity. Beside the grammar book, “*English for Today*” textbook is the only English book that a level IX-X student follows during this time period. On the contrary, in the case of a Bangla language course it is mandatory for a student to follow an extra novel book besides the 1st paper textbook and the grammar book.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

In the last chapter I discuss the context and the rationale of this study. In this chapter I will review relevant literature of this study. The aim of this chapter is to review relevant studies and to find out the gap in the literature. I will also try to illustrate how my study will fit within the existing literature and how this study will contribute to add some new dimension in the English textbooks evaluation in Bangladesh context.

2.1 Importance of ELT textbooks

Textbooks are one of the illuminating materials in schooling. Textbooks are useful in-language classrooms and they have many functions in the curriculum of English Language Teaching (ELT) and support the language teaching and learning process. Classes without textbooks are hard to imagine. The textbook is an aspect of ELT teaching which is almost universal (Hutchinson and Torres, 1994). Moreover, a textbook is used as a source of information in the classrooms. It plays a critical role in the learning process of teaching. No other teaching aid or resource can replace it. Tok (2010) states that the development of knowledge can be evaluated concretely by the use of textbooks. The use of textbooks remains of primary importance even in the times of advanced technology which we are subjected to these days.

A textbook is the cornerstone of any school subject and it represents for both students and teachers the visible heart of any ELT program (Sheldo, 1988). As he states that textbooks not only reflect the tangible center of every ELT curriculum but also provide significant benefits when used in ESL or EFL classrooms for students and teachers alike. It provides the teacher with a goal; they get ideas about why a specific part is to be taught and what educational purpose it fulfills. Moreover, a good textbook saves both students' and teachers' enough time during the teaching-learning process and it is one of the less expensive materials. If there is no

textbook, teachers would face many difficulties while teaching students, they would have to spend a lot of time preparing the content. Regarding the textbooks Awasthi (2006) says that “they can reduce potential professional overload and provide the teacher with the opportunity to give more time to other worthwhile pursuits” (p.3). Besides that, students would also face many problems because they would have no guidelines. Therefore, their teaching-learning process would become slothful. When there is fixed textbook for a course, students can decide what is their target, how far they have come, and where they are right now.

2.2 Criteria for Material Evaluation

When evaluating textbooks layout and design, activities, language skills, language type, subject matter and content come to the forefront. According to Deuri (2012), a good English text book should have some characteristics such as, subject matter should be based on the environment of the student, vocabulary should be regulated, properly chosen and graded, the style should be based on the principle of easy to complex and at the end of each lesson there should be enough number of exercises. Furthermore, Rohmah (2018) mentions that the activities and tasks should be organized and balanced between the four major language skills- listening, reading, speaking and writing.

There are several checklists suggested by different researchers from various backgrounds at different times. Checklist is the most common tool for evaluating textbooks which can check different features. Papajani (2015) proposed 13 common features selected from 10 papers written by various authors covering all the criteria of a good textbook evaluation. At first, an introductory section where all long term and the short-term goals of each module shall be defined. The objective defined in the textbook introductory phase will help the learners and the teachers to make good understanding about the content. Specific objects help teachers to

prepare proper class material while learners also can be specific about what they are learning from the textbook and they also can get a glimpse why they are actually reading this text book. Secondly, good vocabulary explanation and practice is an important criterion for a good textbook. The textbook's vocabulary should be standard and effective for learners. Learning new or unknown words has always been effective in a student's life. Therefore, the author of the textbooks should include new words in the comprehension part either in synonymous form or definition. This, in turn, will help them to practice and add new words into their very own wordbook. Thirdly, textbooks must have well-structured design and layout. The Author's main target should make students able to communicate in English properly.

However, it cannot happen at once, the book along with the teaching needs to take place structurally, stage by stage. Fourthly, there should be periodic review and test sections at the end of each one of the lessons so that the students can understand what they have learned and teachers also can understand how much their students have understood. Fifthly, the books pages should be very good quality and the books are appropriate concerning clarity and elegance of orthography. Colorful pictures of real people and real environments should be used. Hossain (2010) says that the layout and design of the materials will match the students. "The artwork and typefaces should be functional, colorful and appealing." (p.112). Sixthly, appropriate visual materials should be available such as hand-made realia, charts and pictures, to electronic and digital materials etc. It helps to grab the student's attention and they find something interesting in learning therefore, the teaching-learning process becomes more effective. Seventhly, there should be interesting topics and tasks. There should be a wide range of topics for the students to engage in and it should be relevant to their generation to ensure the students can relate and understand the topics better. Eighthly, instruction should be clear. Most of the instructions in the books should be simple and easy for learners to understand. Ninthly, it is important to know whether the content is clearly organized and graded. Author should avoid a

complexity-sensitive formula to sequence the Reading Comprehension texts. Tenthly, authentic languages should be used. This will allow students to use it in their daily lives and gain more practical knowledge. Eleventhly, good grammar presentation and practice should be there. The grammar should be simple and understandable with minimum complexity. The difficulty level should also increase gradually throughout the textbook. twelfth, fluency practice should be there for all four skills- listening, writing, reading and speaking. Ignoring any one can result in not fully learning the language. All four skills need to have a proper balance in practicing. Last but not least, learners should be encouraged to develop their own learning strategies and to become independent in their learning.

Apart from these, while Evaluating any textbook we should always think about the criteria the book is carrying or should carry such as enough practices of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. For instance, the reading section of the book will contain exercises which will upgrade students' vocabulary, creativity and help in proper construction of sentences. They will also gain some additional valuable knowledge based on the current affairs of the world. The writing section will have materials which will strengthen their ability to put pen to paper more promptly and they will have more ideas about what to write for a certain topic. The speaking segment will assist the students to speak more fluently and this will be a major advantage in speeches, debates and general communication. As for listening, a soft copy in disk format can be used, which will cover the other three skills (reading, writing and speaking) in the form of text to speech where students can listen to the passages included in the textbook. Lastly, text books will be designed with authentic sources, in such a way that the students can easily get familiar with the language to build themselves for a better future. These criteria should be maintained when an evaluation of a textbook is done. Evaluation should serve as a teaching and learning base. It is supposed to act as teacher guidance.

2.3 The Role of Teachers in Textbook Evaluation

The teachers play a significant role in choosing the best possible textbook for their students because they understand the mentality of their students and what kind of guideline would help the students to learn fast and effectively. Mahfoodh and Bhanegaonkar (2013) mentions the role of teachers in the curriculum and asserts that teachers are a key factor in the effective implementation of changes in curriculum and particularly in the textbook. Teachers should select those text books which are effective for learners to improve their proficiency level. In doing so, the students' proficiency level about learning and understanding English will enhance. Teachers will be able to distinguish between the text books which have been used in the past and with the current one to come into a conclusion that the latter textbooks are far more improvised and also easier to teach. Ahmadi and Derakhshan (2016) mention that teachers in their positions are able to monitor, assess and administer the education program, in particular teaching textbooks. Teachers are responsible for the evaluation of textbooks, and assessment of teaching materials is an important part of the teacher's work.

Chapter 3

Research Methodology

This chapter presents the methodology of this study. It includes the purpose of this study, research design and the process of data collection and analysis.

3.1 Purpose of the study

This study has been conducted to determine the effectiveness and reliability of the textbook in Bangladesh context. The focus is on the secondary textbook English For Today (Classes IX-X) because the researcher believes that the students of this level need to be more aware of improving their skills and it's the best time to prepare for the future. Furthermore, the S.S.C examination, in Bangladesh context is considered as one of the important examinations for the Bangladeshi secondary students and those who are going to take this test need to study the *English for Today* (Classes IX-X) The significance of this study is to proclaim the efficacy of the EFT textbook by testing it, which is very crucial at the moment to prepare our future generations to be efficient with this international language. In the entire rural and urban area of Bangladesh, this book is considered as the standard book for improving students' skills, therefore it should be maintained as a standard where students have the opportunity to improve their skills. Moreover, the purpose of the study is to examine the layout, design, activities, and tasks in the book, skills covered and balance of skills, language, grading and sequencing of the items, subject and content used and how teachers are using the textbook in the classroom. Hence, in light of the study environment, this analysis aims to examine and record the teachers' and students' responses to the use and effectiveness of the textbook.

3.2 Research questions

This study aims to explore the following question:

(1) To what extent is the *English for Today* textbook (Class IX-X) fulfill the necessity to teaching and learning English at the secondary level?

3.2.1 Research design

This research could be conceptualized as a qualitative research as a checklist is used to analyse the textbook. This is supplemented by data collected through interviews with students and also teachers and reviewing relevant document. To evaluate the textbooks, I adopted a checklist based on the published research (e.g. Garinger, 2000 & Miekley 2005) and based on that checklist I evaluated the textbook. This is then supplemented with data from interviews and from relevant document analysis. According to Garinger (2002), the strategy behind this technique is to remove unsatisfactory textbooks at any review point so that only the most suitable ones are left at the end, making the choice simple and manageable.

3.3 Data Collection Procedure

As already mentioned in the previous section a checklist is adopted based on the published research which is the basis of this textbook evaluation. Several factors prompted me to adopt this. First due to the Covid 19 pandemic, schools in Bangladesh remain closed for a long period and this study was undertaken during this lockdown period. Initially I planned to collect data through interviews with students and teachers regarding their views about the textbooks and to observe in real classroom to find out how the textbook is used in the classroom. However, I have to change the data collection procedure where the checklist I adopted based on the published research become the main instrument to evaluate the textbook and the interview data and the data from various document analysis supplemented the evaluation process. Finally I

have managed to interview some teachers and students to supplement my study although all the interviews were conducted online.

3.4 Data Analysis

This study, qualitative in nature, critically evaluates the textbook *English for Today* (Class IX-X). An evaluation criterion based on the published research of Garinger, 2000 & Miekley 2005 is used to evaluate this textbook. First of all, every lesson of the textbook *English for Today* has been evaluated based on the checklist. Whether the textbook represents all four language skills on the same level, the cognitive focus, appropriate exercises, etc. were the main focus of the evaluation. Moreover, to follow the real impact of this textbook on the learners is being orchestrated by a handful of teachers' and students' opinions. Also, one key feature of this research is to find out the expectations of the learners of this textbook and the teacher's view on how this textbook should be modified to open up its full potential.

In the next few chapters I will present the results of this study. I will particularly focus on the goals of this textbook, skills set and cognitive skills, contents of the textbooks and to what extent this textbook facilitates learning.

Chapter 4

The Goals of the *English for Today* Textbook

The main focus area of this chapter is to analyse the goals of the textbook *English for Today* using the checklist. To elucidate the goals of this textbook, I first specified the target readers of this book and their motivation behind using this book. Then the study focuses on the discrepancy of the goals of this book with the present scenario.

4.1 Textbook's Goals

The secondary curriculum was revised in light of the 2010 National Education Policy, which emphasizes English as an international language for Communication locally and worldwide. The textbooks were *English For Today* developed to assist students in all four language competencies, i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing. Curriculum, syllabus, and textbook development are a continuous process. A community of experts, which included curriculum specialists, content specialists, teacher trainers and teachers in the classroom, produced and rationally analyzed this book in continuation. The book's contents and illustrations have been designed to match the age and cognitive level of the learners. The book emphasizes language skills exercising through a variety of meaningful and enjoyable activities. As for '*English for Today*: for classes 09-10,' the aims of each lesson are specified in terms of what the learners must do in a lesson, rather than how the lesson relates to the overall aim of the language program and how the lesson will help the learners. The textbook may be very useful to teach reading and also to teach writing skills, as it contains many writing activities. Nevertheless, in that case, texts and activities of reading and writing must be genuine. Especially the writing of tasks has to be guided. As for speaking and listening, there seems to be authentic materials in the textbook; rather, some artificial and produced forms of language and tasks are given.

4.2 Target Group of Age and Culture

“*English for today 09-10*” textbook’s goal is to target the 14-15 age group of people and the way it is executed. This age group is a teenage group who needs lots of attention and fun activities. According to the textbook it was absolutely written for this age group because there are lots of fun activities, pictures, group activities and various information. For example, in the first lesson of the textbook there is an activity where people divide into groups of five and tell the story to the groups sequentially. Meanwhile, in unit five lesson one, there is an exercise where students are instructed to form two groups for debate competitions and decide which group will speak against the motion. These exercises make some changes into a regular classroom environment which can grab their attention.

Moreover, in the textbook every lesson has lots of pictures based on the text which may be interesting for the learners. For example, unit eight describes different world heritage. Every lesson describes different heritage of the world and along with the text there is a picture of these heritage sites such as the Shat Gambuj Mosque, The Statue of Liberty, lake Baikal etc. so that learners can know the information and also know what it looks like. There are also some imaginary pictures, imaginary dialogue and imaginary stories which makes fun for them. “*English for today 09-10*” is specially designed for this special age group of children so that they can learn different types of values such as how to become a good citizen, how to build up good character, responsibilities over country and society etc. Moreover, there are lots of texts which tell them about some major issues of our country, some important events and festivals, some world issues, famous people’s biography etc. which they should know in their age and in their early age the learning process will be quick and easy.

Furthermore, this book is not designed for any specific background or religion. It is designed in a way that everyone in general beyond any specification can relate such as in unit three, there are explanations of different kinds of events and festivals which refers to this book written for

no specific background and religion. It focuses on teaching general norms, values and gives information. Moreover, it is sensible to the student's cultural background and interest. The unit 3(events and festivals) of the textbook explains different types of events such as May Day, Pohela Baishakh, Independence Day etc. which informs the learners about our cultural background events and this educates them about our cultures. Moreover, in unit 6 (our neighbors), there is various information about our neighboring countries such as India, Srilanka, Bhutan and Nepal and if the students go through the lesson they will know more about the cultural background and interests of the respective countries. Furthermore, the unit 8 (World Heritage) represents the heritage of different countries, where the learners will find it beneficial and this will encourage them to read the textbook more efficiently.

To some extent, some content serves as a window for learning about the culture of target languages. In the textbook, there are some topics which deal with the culture of target language. From those lessons' learners can learn about the cultural background information of different countries such as unit six (our neighbors) give detailed information about Nepal, The Maldives, Bhutan etc. However, most of the content is written from a Bangladeshi perspective. All the topics, stories, issues, famous people's biography are from Bangladeshi context. Bangladesh is a multicultural country in which people from various ethnic groups live in different parts of the country. While the textbook has been stated to be written with an understanding of the country's cultural diversity. However, the majority of the cultural backgrounds used here are based on national contexts in Bangladesh. The cultural minority contexts (e.g. those in the hill-track culture of Chittagong and others) are not well discussed in the textbook.

4.3 Mismatch with Goals

There is a mismatch between the overall goals of the curriculum and the individual lesson goals in the SSC English language textbook. Although it is predicted that '*English for Today*: for

classes 09-10' should address the four English language skills focused on the theory of learner-centered education in the curriculum, theory is not really expressed in the materials in action. The textbook does not present all the four language skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking equally. The interview session for this research illustrates the teacher's point of view regarding this issue. One of the teachers said that, "we are trying to complete some of the EFT textbook assignments in the classroom but most of the time we can't complete due to the restricted class time". Teachers also said they only emphasize the activities of reading and writing. Moreover, they claimed that they cannot complete listening and speaking activities due to the lack of technical support and the time limit for classes. The textbook places more emphasis on reading, writing and to some extent speaking, but little emphasis on listening. While the SSC curriculum indicates that materials should be developed based on real-world events, the topics and materials are artificially created, and they are not authentic. The textbook provides the learners with little materials needed in real communicative contexts for listening and speaking skills.

Overall, the researcher arguments for the textbook do not correspond to the internet textbook management. The textbook may be useful for teaching reading and also teaching writing skills. However, in that case, texts and activities need to be authentic in reading and writing. As for speaking and listening, there appears to be no authentic materials in the textbook; rather, some artificial and produced forms of language and tasks are given. The illustrations are often created in the textbook. They are essentially drawn photographs of various people, locations and objects. The textbook's paper and print consistency aren't acceptable either. Apparently, the textbook cannot fulfill the national ELT program objective. The textbook should not be used in its present state as core resources for the general teaching of all the four language skills. The textbook needs to be updated and revamped with accurate listening and speech resources augmented.

Chapter 5

Skill Sets and Cognitive Skills in *English for Today*

The evaluation process of this research has been constructed on the basis of the four language skills. This chapter analyses whether the textbook *English for Today* has been written in a balanced way with all of these skills included. Also, the focus shifts on the use of cognitive skills used in this book that helps to attract the readers attention.

5.1 Four Skills

The four skills, reading, listening, speaking and writing, should be combined in an efficient way to make English teaching -learning productive. Such skills should be approached in a way that helps students meet the goals that are defined for them and slowly improve their communicative skills. '*English for Today: for classes 09-10*' the four English language skills centered on the theory of learner-centered education in the curriculum should be addressed. Four skills give many valuable purposes in a language classroom. Such objectives provide learners with scaffolded help, opportunities to develop, contexts in which they can use the language to share real knowledge, proof of their own skill. And these four skills are interrelated with each other. So, it's important to cover all of these four skills in a language learning textbook. However, theory is not really expressed in the materials in action. The textbook does not equally present all the four language skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking.

The *English For Today* textbooks has been developed to help students attain competency in all four language skills, i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing. However, the textbook's activities show that there are only focuses on writing and reading skills. Some have speaking activities but there is less amount to listening activities where learners can develop their skills. Analyzing the textbook, it is transparent that there is only one listening activity per unit which is not enough and these activities are very small and simple for them.

Also, there are lots of opportunities where students can build up their writing skill. Writing is the primary basis upon which to appraise one's work, learning, and intellect. In the textbook, there are various writing exercises and activities so that learners can increase their writing skill. Sometimes students are instructed to write the question answer individually, sometimes they have to write a paragraph about a given topic. There are 4 to 5 lessons in a unit and more or less every lesson has some exercises on writing. For example, in unit one there are four lessons, and every lesson has at least one exercise where students have to write individually. Therefore, *English for today's* textbook has enough space for improving the writing skill. From one interview, a teacher claims that "listening and speaking skills are mainly important but the education system (national board examination format) focuses on mainly writing so writing is the most important skill in reality regarding the SSC curriculum and the textbook also follows this trend".

Moreover, if we look at the reading activities in the textbook, it is pretty good enough for a student to develop their reading skills by these activities. In the textbook, each and every lesson has some comprehension, stories, biography, dialogues. For instance, in unit two there are 5 lessons and every lesson contain a reading exercise so that learners have enough opportunities to read those texts and improve their reading skills.

On the other hand, if we look for the speaking and listening activities, we may get disappointed because there are lots of shortcomings for these two activities. First of all, if we look for speaking activities, we can see that there are very few activities for speaking. However, there are some activities which may indicate speaking skills but those are not clear enough. For example, there are some activities such as discuss in pairs or discuss in a group, look at the picture and work in pairs, some are picture narrating. These are not more effective speaking tests or speaking exercises where students can talk frequently or practice talking with any given topic. It's not helping a student to be fluent and also doesn't help to become a public speaker.

Because in this exercise students might be making a group or pair, but teachers cannot be always aware that students are speaking in English and whether they use new vocabulary in their conversation. Interviews with the students also ratified this statement, they claimed that they worked in a group but they did not discuss in English with their pairs. Moreover, these repeated exercises might be boring for them so they could lose their interests. In the textbook, there should be some speaking exercise such as story completion, playing cards, storytelling, brainstorming, role play etc. Also, in one interview with a student, she claimed that, “the speaking exercises are not that much interesting and all these exercises suggest is to make a pair or a group and discuss with your partners or peers, and this repetitive process of the same type of exercises made me skip or ignore the whole task”.

Meanwhile, listening exercise is also not sufficiently covered in the textbook. After analyzing the listening activities of the textbook, we can say that these are not enough for a student to improve their listening skills. In the textbook, there are very few activities such as in the textbook, there are 4 to 5 lessons in each unit. However, listening activities are available in only one lesson such as in unit three there are six lessons but there is only one listening exercise in the whole unit. Moreover, sometimes there are no listening activities in the whole unit. From the interview session it is apparent that the teachers emphasize reading and writing skills and ignore the most important language skills-listening and speaking skills. One of the teachers said that the main reasons for this problem are – the exams require only reading and writing skills that ignore listening and speaking skills and also large class size with a large number of students who have difficulty speaking tasks. That’s why they skip these exercises and tasks. Teachers said at the time of the interview, they only emphasize the activities of reading and writing. They also claimed that they cannot complete listening and speaking activities due to the lack of technical support and the time limit for classes. But one teacher admitted that there

is no audio speaker in the school so she never used the speaker in the classroom for listening. Therefore, it is apparent that the four skills are not covered sufficiently in the textbook.

5.2 Cognitive Skills

Cognitive abilities are the key skills the brain uses in thought, understanding, learning, recalling, reasoning and paying attention. Academic learning is quick, simple, productive and fun when Cognitive Skills are high. According to cognitive theory proposed by psychologist Jean Piage, cognition is the knowledge when it includes perception, learning, memory, reasoning, problem solving etc.

Critical thinking is not limited to a particular subject but is a student's ability to think more rationally and clearly. Critical thinking is important for students as it gives them the ability to think in the right way and more efficiently and methodically solve problems. Therefore, the skills we need to think critically are varied and includes observation, analysis, understanding, reflection, evaluation, inference, explanation, problem solving and decision taking.

In the textbook, there are some exercises which indicate critical thinking, where students have to think about it before writing or speaking. Most of the exercises are observation and analysis problems. In the textbook, there are lots of pictures where students are instructed to observe it and tell or write about what they think by seeing the picture and instruct them to give their opinion. For instance, there is an exercise called “Look at the pictures and caption below. How do you feel looking at the photo? Why do you think people take such risks to go home to celebrate Eid?”. In this exercise students have to observe it and have to analyze the topic by their own experience. In the textbook there are lots of exercises like that. In that case, students have some opportunity to think critically.

Furthermore, there is some exercise where students have to explain the topic by their own thoughts such as an exercise given in the unit eleven-lesson two, “Massive burning of the

world's coal reserves may lead to a worldwide ecological disaster. – Do you support this view? Explain why/ why not.” In this exercise, students will give their own explanations and tell why they support it or not so they have to think critically. These exercises instruct them to write a paragraph by given topic or ask them to write their opinion with example. In that part, this approach helps them to think and use their own method.

Moreover, there is another exercise in the textbook where I have to understand it first, then have to analyze it and then they can solve the problem. This exercise is given in unit fourteen – lesson six. There is a given situation where it is told that “suppose your mother/ father has given you some money to spend on anything you like in a fair. Going around the fair, you have shortlisted the following items. But you have enough money to buy only one thing. Write a paragraph about what you will buy and why?”. So, students have to understand the task, then they have to check the shortlist and then they have to think about what they can buy, what the most necessary things are and why they have to buy these things because he/she can buy only one thing, so they have to choose very wisely. Therefore, it’s a very good exercise which helps students to think critically. In the textbook, there are lots of exercises such as substitution tables, charts, fill in the blanks, making dialogues, question answers, tell them to make a list, choosing the right answer, analyzing pictures etc. which promotes critical thinking of the text. One of the interviewees (teacher) agrees that in the textbook there are various kinds of writing exercises where the students can give their opinion and it helps them to improve their cognitive skills.

However, if we analyze the book, it is seen that it doesn’t have that many difficult exercises by which the students will show their cognitive skills. There is nothing about their assimilation or accommodation that’s why they can’t apply for their scheme. Most of the exercise is about finding answers from the passage and for that the students don’t work their brains out that much. Furthermore, the fill in the gaps or matching which are enlisted are also very easy for

them. They are not given any kind of problem-solving task where learners can use their existing knowledge to complete it. Therefore, to some extent, in the textbook there are some exercises (40%) where students can improve their cognitive skills and other that (60%) are in general exercise where students have not any opportunities to think critically. So, cognitive type of exercise should be increased more in the textbook.

Chapter 6

Exercises and Activities of EFT Textbook

The motivation behind this research is to find out whether the textbook is convenient for the students and that enables the research to focus on the exercises and activities portion that this book covers. Evaluating for the germane contents the research focuses on the vocabulary, the way that the exercises are presented to the readers and most of all the authenticity of the textbook.

6.1 Vocabulary

An ideal textbook should introduce all the vocabulary that are being used in a lesson. There should be a different section below every lesson where all the new vocabulary is introduced with its means and if possible, some synonyms. However, the book contained very few new vocabularies. And the vocabularies were presented in a few varieties but not enough. After analyzing the book, only two varieties stood out: look up the meaning of the word and construct a sentence and match the meaning to words. But these were only presented in a few lessons.

After analyzing the textbook, the researcher says that the vocabulary was not introduced at a sufficient pace. The new vocabulary was introduced in a few lessons which is not enough. New vocabularies should have been introduced in every lesson in small numbers so that learners can obtain vocabularies related to that topic. After analyzing the book, the clear view is that this point was lacking from the book. Researcher says that there are very few sections where the new words are introduced clearly. There are lots of new vocabularies but those are given through comprehension. There is no specific box given where new vocabularies are indicated. Therefore, students are not instructed to communicate using new vocabulary. One student named Ahona said that “Our English teacher just comes into the classroom and opens a lesson then reads out a comprehension without telling us the meaning. If we asked the word meaning

then they told us that particular word's meaning and after that, she told us to do some exercises based on the lecture. Sometimes she checked and sometimes she didn't."

However, there are very few lessons where we can see some activities which allow students to use new vocabulary in the task-based activities. But these are very less such as in a whole unit, we will find that type of activity in only one lesson. For example, in unit thirteen (media and modes of e-communication), in lesson one there is a box where new vocabularies are given which might not be known by students such as Facebook, e-mail, web site, blog, twitter, e-learning, iPod etc. So, there is a task when they instruct to work in pairs and discuss which of the following words they are familiar with and how they are related to e-communication. Therefore, these activities have allowed students to communicate using new vocabulary. As same as that, in unit fourteen there are ten lessons, however, within these ten lessons there is only one activity in lesson eight where a task-based activity that allows students to communicate using new vocabulary. For instance, there is a box full of new vocabulary which is used in the given text and instructs students to write two paragraphs by using words and phrases from the box below. In that way, students can communicate by using new vocabulary.

6.2 Opportunities to motivate and challenge learners

In the textbook, there are lots of exercises to develop learner's skills some are writing exercise, some are speaking, reading or listening. These exercises may continue to motivate and challenge a learner. However, the real picture is different from the expectation. In the textbook, most of the reading exercises remain the same pattern such as in textbooks, there are many compositions and students are instructed to simply read it and after that they have to do some exercise based on the passage. The most common line for reading exercises in textbooks is "Read the text and answer the questions that follow". After that, which exercise they have to do is also very common and simple. Most of the time they have to do question answers, choose

correct answers, true false, fill in the blanks. “Question answer” is the most common among these exercises where they have to give some answer based on the passage. They are very simple and easy because most of the answers are in the passage, students can directly take it from the passage. So, these kinds of repetitive exercise cannot motivate or challenge a learner. Moreover, listening and speaking exercise techniques also not in a variety of ways. Here, the amount of listening exercises is very limited and these exercise problems are very specific and similar looking such as fill in the blanks or choose the right answer and these exercises are also very limited around 4-5 questions, they have to answer based on the audio clips. Same as that, speaking exercise is also very similar type in the textbook, most of the exercise is pair work, group work or picture describing. All the techniques are the same and also very repetitive which does not continue to motivate and challenge the learner. They try to skip these exercises because there is no new challenge for them so that they may lose interest.

However, after analyzing the writing part, it seems quite good for the learners to challenge and motive further because there are lots of exercises where they use different types of format, techniques etc. to challenge the learners. For instance, in the textbook, there are some exercises where students can give their opinion, justifications, and write freely their own perspective. Moreover, some exercise about graph charts and they have to analyze it, some are picture descriptions, some are given a situation and instruct students to find out the solutions and give valid reasons behind their answers. Therefore, there are many varieties of exercise which may grab students’ attention and also increase their motivation. Learners love to explore new challenges. After analyze the textbook and its context, there are lots of reading materials in the textbook some are artificially written story, some are biography, data information, last unit is about literature where have famous poets and writer’s story such as Shakespeare’s short stories collected from The Merchant of Venice etc. which can create interesting enough for students to enjoy reading.

Moreover, in unit seven (people who stand out) describe some famous people's biography, their achievement, contribution etc. these stories seem interesting for students when they can know about many things about their lifestyle and may inspire them by reading these texts. In the textbook, there are lots of texts from where students may find lots of interesting topics, information, inspiration etc. They can know about national and international issues, problems etc.

However, the textbook could be more interesting. Because according to my perspective, some topics might be boring for the students and they might be losing interest by reading these contexts. In the last part of the book, there are very few stories, there could be added some more literature stories which can grab the attention of the students. And if every lesson will have colorful digital pictures then students willing want to read the contexts.

Apart from these, beside the board books there are some other English improvement books which are used in English medium school. These books are basically borrowed from India and these books are very color printed and digital concepts. In those books there are lots of interesting stories with lots of pictures based on the contexts. And these stories have a moral storyline so that students can learn and develop English skills along with their moral values. If these types of techniques can be added in the textbook, students will willingly read the textbook with more enjoy.

6.3 Clear and necessary Instructions

The textbook has appropriate instructions for learners as they develop those skills. There are clear and simple instructions given for the learners. The instructions about what the students should do are given in the textbook step by step. Which part they have to listen to or write or read are visibly constructed. In the textbook, before a comprehension starts there is a clear instruction to read the passage or text and also gives a short information about the topic or what

students will know by reading the comprehension such as “now read the following passage to know more about environmental pollution in Bangladesh”. Moreover, there is also instruction for students to read the comprehension along with the exercise which is related to that comprehension. For instance, “now read the text below and find answers to the above question”. In the whole text, there are lots of comprehensions about so many topics and before starting all have clear instructions for students to read the comprehension. Therefore, students may not get confused about the passage and also by reading headlines they would have a clear idea about the topic and what they have to do further after reading the text.

The example is sufficiently clear and similar enough to the text to contribute to its context rather than subtract from it. In the textbook, different units discuss different topics and every unit has given sufficient clear and relevant examples through lessons without creating any kind of distraction. For instance, in the unit eight it talks about world heritage and gives world heritage’s example through its lessons such as The Shat Gambuj Mosque, The Somapura Mahavihara, The Statue of Liberty, Lake Baikal, Taj Mahal etc. which represents as an example of world heritage.

Moreover, in the lessons all topics are discussed clearly and give sufficient examples and pictures so that students have a clear idea about the topic. For example, when Taj Mahal is described in the context, it is given a picture of the Taj Mahal and gives all the description and information about it. Therefore, students are not subtracted from the context, they will relate all the example, information, example with the topic.

6.4 Use of authentic materials

Authentic materials mean those materials which are not designed or prepared for language teaching purposes. Usually it was for providing real life use or practical use. Newspaper, articles, movies, songs which are not made for language learning, but those things are used in

class for language improvement. Contents in the book are intended to be used for learning the English language. Content includes real-based stories, biography, daily life conversations and informative texts, which were meant for learning. Therefore, these are not authentic language pieces. There is no exercise which indicates authentic activities. All are organized and made for learning purposes.

While the textbook authority has argued that the textbook is based on authentic language and activities, for pedagogical purposes the vocabulary used in the book is generated in fact. Approximately one hundred and twenty-four visual images are used in the textbook; but only a few images appear authentic. Many of the pictures (80 percent) are drawn artificially though. For example, the first unit is about good citizens and in this unit all the pictures which are related to the text are artificially drawn.

Tasks of listening and speaking do not seem real. As for speaking, it is expected that the learners will work in pairs and group discussions so that sometimes students just skip it because they are not interested in it. As mentioned before, there are very few listening exercises but these listening tasks that are given in the textbook are not authentic and there is no authentic recorded tape provided with the textbook.

Chapter 7

Content Structure of EFT Textbook

The way a textbook is structured and presented to the reader is the most important criteria for a textbook to be effective. Ergo, this chapter specifically focuses on the structure, layout design and the supplementary materials of the textbook *English for Today*.

7.1 Content

The subject is topically or functionally presented in a logical way. The analysis of the textbook shows that the content of the textbook is organized very logically. The first few units explain some basic norms and values such as good character, responsibilities about our surrounding environment, pastime etc. After that, the content goes something beyond the learner's knowledge. That content gives so much information and data about some of our events, festivals, and some famous person's biography. And lastly, some units thoroughly explain some worldwide topics which may be some complex information for the learners such as world heritage, e commerce etc. If those topics come first in the textbook, then learners might be scared to read it and they may not find any interest in it. Therefore, the content seems to go functionally easier to complex in a logical way.

Moreover, the sequence organized in the textbook reflects second language knowledge acquisition adequately. It is seen that the textbook started with basic information about lifestyle and then it gave the learners information about different aspects such as Biography, World Heritage and so on. On the other hand, the textbook gives the students various topics to read about cultures, environment, e-commerce, technology and so on which helps them explore different things, developing them to current second language acquisition knowledge.

7.2 Layout and Design

In the textbook, to grab the attention of the learners, the arrangement of the design is pretty well such as there are several pictures which they relate with the stories, word size is standard, not so small or not so large, pictures are also colorful and clear. Researchers claim that the book cover is not appealing for the 9-10 class's students. It's a very simple cover where only the name and class are mentioned. Its color is also very simple, dark pink color with a very simple flowery design. The book's color is very much dull for students, there is no charm in the cover.

Therefore, the textbook might not be interesting to the learners. . A cover of a book makes a first impression on its readers. A book cover style is also one of the most critical ways of grabbing the attention. Usually, most of the students do not willingly like any kind of textbook. An interviewee says that "our English 1st paper class is very boring to me, most of the time we just passed the class time through gossiping". However, if the textbook would seem to attract them at a first glance, they might have some interest in reading it. Therefore, *English For Today's* book's cover is not that much appealing for the learners. It could be more attractive, colorful and some designs or pictures which indicate the book's theme. It's not important to make it fancy but it should be attractive to them, it's important.

Moreover, images are also not very high-quality digital pictures. The whole book is black and white print and there is no coloring picture at all. Most of the pictures are drawn artificially and some are still pictures. However, some pictures are so small which is hard to understand the actual scenarios and it's also very difficult for its black and white print. For example, in unit nine – lesson one there are some pictures about odd jobs, but these pictures are so small and because of black and white print it's very hard to understand the picture and there is a clear instruction that looks at the following pictures and discusses them. However, if it's hard to find the actual meaning of a picture, how can a student discuss it?

7.3 Supplementary Materials

After analyzing the textbook, the researchers claim that textbooks have not included that much supplementary materials which is very important in the teaching learning process. By supporting student learning, these materials can significantly increase the student achievement.

The textbook doesn't include supplementary photocopy ready handouts, workbook, worksheet.

One of the interviewees (student) claims that "In the classroom, we have not used any kind of handouts or workbooks, we just do the previous model questions for practice. However, teachers sometimes use a guidebook to solve the problems". In addition, there is some audio chip which indicates listening exercise. No video clips and web-based exercise are found in the textbook. During the interview, one of the students claimed that "I never found any CD clip with the textbook and teachers also never gave us any listening exercise in the classroom".

These supplementary materials are very important in a classroom, it creates a different environment, variation and helps students to improve their skills. Though these kinds of facilities are not available in the textbook, it becomes boring to the students.

Chapter 8

Conclusion

The "*English For Today*" for class IX-X textbook is the product of CLT approach. Since this book is designed according to the CLT approach which emphasizes on constructive skills-speaking and writing along with receptive skills-listening and reading, an evaluation proposal was made by this research to find out whether the textbook's content and activities are arranged in a balanced way or not.

8.1 Summary of the findings

The results of the present study were summarized and illustrated in the following in this chapter segment. In this research, the areas of main interest were the four skills part in the textbook "English for Today". The findings based on these four different skills are listed as below.

8.1.1 Analysis of the writing skill

In the "*English for Today*" textbook, writing has been given the utmost priority. Almost all the lessons include writing exercises and these exercises contain paragraph writing, story writing, open-ended question answers, dialogues, letters writing, etc. which is enough for teenagers to develop their writing ability. Moreover, there are many writing tasks in the textbook which allows the students to think critically while answering the questions.

8.1.2 Analysis of the reading skill

Like the writing skill, reading skill has also been addressed to a large extent in the textbook. Almost every lesson has a comprehension passage where text demands that the learners have to read them to do further tasks. Moreover, these comprehensions are standard for class IX-X level which is not so easy or not so hard for them. The texts represent current issues, Bangladeshi events, biography of famous people which may increase learners' interest to read

the texts. However, in the comprehension, most of the time new vocabularies are not listed separately in the new vocabulary checklist. As a result, most of the students just go through the passages and don't notice the new words most of the time.

8.1.3 Analysis of the speaking skill

From this research, it has been shown that the speaking portion of the textbook "*English for Today*" is not well structured and lacks speaking exercises. In terms of speaking, some lessons contain certain lesson-related activities and it is recommended that the learners discuss topics in pairs or groups in the class. Moreover, role-play scenarios are rarely encouraged. All the speaking exercises are the same type and there is no variation in the speaking exercises. Often, learners are not scaffolded with language forms which are useful in the development of practical speaking skills in speech activities.

8.1.4 Analysis of the listening skill

In the "*English for Today*" textbook, listening skill is the most overlooked portion of all four language skills. According to the textbook, listening activities have been presented in 10 lessons out of 65 lessons. In reality, the textbook does not provide any audio tracks for the learners and the teachers for classroom participation. Teachers are often asked to read a text which the learners are then supposed to listen to, even though the transcript is not provided with the texts. Even the few listening tasks that this book offers are not adequate for the IX-X level students.

8.1.5 Authenticity of the materials used in the textbook

From this research, it shows that the textbook "*English for Today*" lacks authenticity in terms of the context. This book is written in terms of facts and it follows the general features of a standard textbook but for language learning purposes it is not adequate. In the preface of the

book, NCTB states that the book is designed based on the CLT method and one of the most important factors of the CLT method is the use of authentic materials. However, the overuse of facts and specific language structure made the textbook “*English for Today*” lacks in authenticity.

The findings from the above-mentioned checklist and interview questions, jointly answer the research questions that drive this study. The questions on the research are:

- (1) Does the English for Today textbook have a balanced way to express all the four language competencies to the learners?
- (2) Does the coursebook use an appropriate way in the classroom?

As this has been a qualitative research study, researcher has used the themes based on the research questions to find the answers. Consequently, the questions were answered collectively through the findings summarized in sections 9.1 to 9.1.6 of this chapter. Although it is expected that '*English for Today: for classes IX-X*' will present the four English language skills based on learner-centered education philosophy in the curriculum, the philosophy is not really reflected in the materials. The textbook does not present all four language skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking equally. The textbook places more emphasis on reading, writing and to some extent speaking, but little emphasis on listening. Moreover, the content and materials are artificially created, and are not authentic. The textbook provides the learners with insufficient listening and speaking skills that is necessary in real communicative contexts. However, it is true that the textbook contains some listening and speaking exercises and activities but most of the time both teacher and students skip those because they are not enlisted in the syllabus and students feel demotivated as there is no mark allocation for that and these activities are not as much interesting for them.

This study has explored various aspects of the textbook *English for Today*. Although based on a small-scale research it is impractical to recommend specific changes, I will present some recommendation that may be considered in the future.

Firstly, the presentation of texts, artworks, diagrams, etc. could be attractive and clear in order to make the textbook relevant and effective to the learners. Thus, they can feel interested to read the textbook. Moreover, typefaces and pictures of the textbook can be colorful, practical and attractive, as well as improving the consistency of paper and cover pages and maximizing the density of texts. Secondly, the textbook should provide a balance of activities such as free and control exercises that can be spread equally, and tasks should concentrate on both fluent and accurate development. In order to prevent monotony and boredom, too much repetition of the same form of communicative tasks should be avoided, otherwise it would be demoralizing and optimal results could not be obtained. Thirdly, authentic subject matters or language in both written and spoken forms should be added, or the degree in authenticity can be increased in the textbook. Otherwise learners may face difficulties while communicating with the real-life world. Moreover, some other authentic materials such as newspapers, movies, magazines etc. can be used in the classroom as supplementary materials for effective language learning. Therefore, learners can compare with real world communication.

Apart from these, the topics and materials should be more stimulating, inspiring and challenging. The current relevance of the topics and contents could be improved to an optimal level. Lastly, a sufficient balance of four main skills may be provided in order to train the competent communicative learners. Careful consideration can be paid to the sub-skills of all the four basic skills. In the classroom, attention should be drawn to the practice of speaking skills by developing further speaking exercises such as role play, conversation, etc. Moreover, EFT textbooks should be taught using technology, i.e. multimedia. Therefore, listening

exercises can be carried out in the classroom by ensuring the equipment such as at least a couple of speakers are available.

8.2 Conclusion

The purpose of this research was to assess the "English For Today" textbook for form XI-XII. The research was conducted to check whether or not the contents used in the textbook or the tasks and activities mentioned in the book are real-life based, and whether or not the four competences are integrated. Based on the findings, the big deficiency of the book is that it has barely enough space to develop listening and speaking skills. The main focus of this research was to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses that exist in the textbook so that they can be addressed properly to strengthen and enhance the textbook for future use.

To conclude, this research is a product of a qualitative research approach and for the short time period, the interview sample was forced to be moderately small-scale. Moreover, the Covid-19 case of the current world forced the interview process to be executed online and not in person. Therefore, many questions remain unanswered in the cross-sectional areas of this specific subject matter. The researcher hopes to conduct an interview session with a diverse group of students across the country as her research interest. In this way, the bigger picture of the current English teaching situation in the secondary levels of our schools would be clearly visible and necessary changes could be recommended.

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Appendix A: Checklist

The following checklist is used to evaluate the textbook:

A. Program and course

- Does the textbook support the program's goals and curriculum?
- Is the textbook part of a series and would it be appropriate to use the whole series, if so?
- Does the textbook discuss a large number of the course objectives?
- Was that textbook written for this age group and background learners?
- Does the textbook represent the preferences of the learners regarding layout, design and organization?
- Is the textbook sensible to the students' cultural background and interests?

B. Approach:

- Are teacher and learner roles consistent with current second language acquisition knowledge?
- Do the sequencing, level of complexity, pacing and variety described in the textbook reflect current second language acquisition knowledge?
- Does this approach ask learners to build and use their own methods and work towards autonomy?

C. Skills:

- Are the skills presented in the textbook appropriate to the course?

- Will the textbook have appropriate instruction for learners as they develop those skills?
- Will the skills discussed in the textbook provide a wide variety of cognitive abilities that will challenge learners?

D.Content:

- Is the subject topically or functionally presented in a logical way or organized way?
- Does the content serve as a window for learning about the culture of target languages (American, British, etc.)?
- Are the read collections authentic language pieces?
- Does the material contain real-life issues compared to texts for native speakers, which ask the reader to think critically about his / her worldview?
- Are the collections of texts representative of literary genres and do they contain several sentence structures?

E.Vocabulary and Grammar

- Are the new vocabulary words presented in a variety of ways?
- Were the new vocabulary terms introduced at a sufficient pace so that the text is clear and students can maintain a new vocabulary?

F.Exercises and Activities

- Are The four skills sufficiently covered?
- Are there interactive, task-based activities that allow students to communicate using new vocabulary?
- Do the textbook instructions tell the students to read for comprehension?

- Do the exercises promote critical thinking of the text?

G. The Attractiveness of the Text and Physical Make-up

- Is the book cover really appealing?
- Is high-quality digital imagery aesthetic?
- Is the example sufficiently clear and similar enough to the text to contribute to its context, rather than subtract from it?
- Is the text still interesting enough for students to enjoy reading it?

H. Supplementary Exercises and Materials

- Does the textbook include supplementary photocopy ready handouts, workbook, worksheet, assessment, audio and video disc, web-based exercise?
- Are the techniques varied in format so that they will continue to motivate and challenge the learner?

I. Practical Concerns

- Is the textbook available and cost-effective?
- Can the textbook be obtained in a timely manner?
- Is it available as an ebook?