



## A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF ENGLISH TEACHING MATERIAL OF ENGLISH FOR TODAY (EFT) BOOK FOUR AND THE PATH TO ENGLISH: A CASE STUDY TO LOOK AT WHAT WE TEACH AT SCHOOLS

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### ABSTRACT

This research paper examines a comparative analysis of English for Today of book four with The Path to English of same level. It underpins the differences between two books in the perspective of English teaching adaptability and understanding. It tries to dig out what sort of influences are held while teaching two different books for the same level of the student at the same second language situation. This also paves the ways of consideration in developing teaching materials for English language teaching to the young learners.

### I. Introduction

According to Hutchinson and waters 1987), textbook evaluation is basically a straightforward, analytical “matching process: matching needs to available solutions”. There are two books to be evaluated, one is English for Today (EFT) class four, edition 2011 and another one is The Path to English class 4, edition 2011 whose authors are, C.J. Ridout, Sabina Pandit, Rita Wilson. English for Today book is recommended by National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) and its authors are Shaheen M Kabir, Amirun Nesa, Naina Shahzadi, Mahmud Ullah. All the Government primary schools of Bangladesh must follow the recommended book by NCTB. On the other hand, the later book is taught in American Standard School at Baridhara which is a highly expensive in English Medium School at Dhaka, Bangladesh and also in many private schools of India. The problem is that there are some critical issues regarding the material that are used for English language teaching to the young learners especially in Bangladesh. The research paper actually compares between two streams educational material so that it can provide a better understanding for using the material in an effective way

### II. Literature Review

In this highly communicative era, realizing the immense importance of English as a way of local and worldwide communication, Bangladesh government has emphasized English language learning (ELL) from the very initial stage (from Grade 1) to prevent the language being fossilized in the advanced stage. (Mitu, 2014) The primary English curriculum 2012, modified in the light of the National Education Policy 2010 has emphasized the development of learner’s communicative competence in English.

In Bangladesh the system of education is divided into three different branches. Students are free to choose anyone of them provided that they have the means. These branches are: The English Medium, The Bengali Medium, and The Religious Branch. (Zaman, 2011)



She also mentions “there are only one or two Bangla books which are even written by Indian writers and those Bangla texts hardly tell about the culture and tradition of Bangladesh. The syllabuses of the English Medium Schools are designed in western context. The authors of the books, either from the western country or Indian, their books in a way the students are not getting any essence of the culture of their own country.” The problem is very vivid and it is necessary to realize it as soon as possible.

According to Crystal (1997:5) there is the closest of links between language dominance and cultural power. In addition, he says that English is now a global property; it is no longer a possession of any particular country or countries so it is utterly unjustified to learn Literature according to English context.

### III. Methodology

Regarding criterion selection for the assessment and analysis, the books of Sheldon (1988) and Penny Ur (1996) are consulted. After the criterion selection, comparative tools are used to analysis side by side. It is done in qualitative approach. For this two books are evaluated on the criterion by practitioners separately and finally compared with each other. Qualitative weight ranking methods have been used for the research. For giving the marks on several aspects, five ranges are considered. These are : Poor = 1, Fair = 2 , Good = 3, Very Good = 4 , Excellent = 5. Mixed methods have been applied to understand and interpret the results reliable and valid.

### IV. Discussions

- Objectives explicitly laid out in an introduction and implemented in the material:** The objective of The English for Today (EFT) book is to improve “the quality of primary education” with focusing the “four basic skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing”. On analyzing the book it is found that it focuses on reading, speaking and writing. There is little emphasis on listening. The method followed in the book is on the basis of communicative language Teaching (CLT) method.

On the contrary, ‘The path to English’ does not provide clear objectives, even it does clearly mention the level of the students that the book is made for. However, it tells about four basic skills whereas in the whole book they only focus on reading and writing.
- Availability:** EFT book is available in all primary schools of Bangladesh but not in open market. Unauthorized person cannot access to it and it is not available in the open market for buying and selling. On the other side the path to English is available in the open market; anybody can buy or sell it. But it is only available in the cities but not in rural areas.
- Approach educationally and socially acceptable to target community:** The names in the book like Runa, Reza, Dina, Helen are the examples of bringing local culture into the reading activities. This also exemplifies the dialect of the respective country. The discussion topics like “A daily Routine, A day in a farmer’s life, Family and friends” are socially acceptable topics for the discussion of the community.

Whereas the other book that is studied in the English medium school is not culturally appropriate and the materials have the examples of the American culture rather than the focusing on the Bangladeshi culture. The Indian gods and goddesses are also brought into the account as it is not totally suited with the in Islamic values with Muslim community. The picture used in the book don’t have relationship with the culture of Bangladesh. So the fatal of the book “The path to English” is that it is not culturally appropriate in case of Bangladesh.
- Layout/graphics:** The layout of the path to English is attractive and colorful. It has commercial purpose so that it can attract the other people to buy the book and read it. So the publisher’s main concern was to attract the market people to sell the book.

However, the picture of English for Today book was culturally appropriate in many cases but it is not as colorful and attractive as the other book is.



5. **Accessibility:** All the students whether he or she is poor or rich, they can attend the school and have the access to the EFT book. They can study it and bring it home. So it is more accessible to all general students.

However the book that is taught in the English medium school cannot be accessible for middle and poor class people. The price is high and one cannot easily buy them and teach them to their children

6. **Appropriate visual material:** The EFT book and other book provide the pictures but it does not have any CD or video materials .So it cannot be called that these books do not have any digital version which can be accessible through multimedia.
7. **Interesting topics:** In the EFT book we find, lots of interesting topic such as food and meals, family and friends, telling the time, mice, a picnic and a thirsty crow etc. These topics are interesting for the young learners. But, the topics do not cover the games and interactive activities that are very much applicable for those students.

The Path to English has also got some interesting topics as for example it has different stories and fairy tales. But the language level is higher and it will not reach to the expected level of the students.

8. **Varied topics and tasks for different level and learning style:** There are various topics that are interesting for the children aged 8 to 10. If we explore the Gardener's multiple intelligence theory, we will find the priority of different intelligences in different learners .In EFT book 'Name of the month', 'Stress Practice', 'Road lights' and 'Mice' etc are found to satisfy the need of different learners .But it could be more dynamic and the types topic could be more wide ranging

However in other book "The path to English" other book has also got different stories as for example it describes a story of Robindranath Tagore whose writings are widely accepted both in east and west.

9. **Clear Instructions:** The instructions in the EFT book are clear and short; as for example:
- Look , listen and say
  - Circle the right answer
  - Read about the Mehedies daily routine
  - Listen and complete

So it is obvious that the level of the students that the book intended can make easy understand for the students

However, the other book the path to English has longer sentences, as for example:

"One student from the class will read the following extract while others will listen carefully:"

"Change the verb given below according to the tense indicated in the brackets and fill in the blanks. The first one has been done for you"

Here the students might fell in understanding problem and instructions will take time both for teachers and students.

10. **Systematic coverage of Syllabus:** In both books, the contents for particular class are arranged and it is placed before the detail discussion. Page no with the content no are identical and understandable. So the mark for both books is 4
11. **Content Clearly organized and graded:** In the EFT book it is found that contents are not clearly organized and graded in some cases. As for example the contents are arranged in this way:
- **Numbers (101-150)**
  - Road Lights
  - Pronunciation Practice I
  - A picnic
  - **Numbers (151-200)**



Here we see the discordant of the contents. They should follow a sequence so that it can be smoother for the learning process of students. But, it is also noticeable they have graded the materials from easy type to harder type. But the grading case is serious in the case of "The path of to English". It does not consider the sequential level of the content. Rather, it begins with difficult content and continues without maintaining proper balance

12. **Appropriacy:** Observing the whole book of EFT, it is found that the book has

- Easy language
- Authentic language
- Common Vocabulary

Observing other book it is found that The Path to English has

- Long sentences basically complex one
- Inauthentic Language
- Strong vocabulary

13. **Authenticity:** In EFT book, we explore the lessons like 'Greeting and Introduction', 'Commands, Requests and Instructions', 'Making requests'. The languages that are used in those lessons are very much authentic.

On the contrary, the other books do not have much authentic language.

14. **Fluency practice in four skills:** In EFT book we find the activities like MCQ, question answer, pair work, group work, free speaking activity, fill in the gaps that try to enclose the four basic skills. However it could be wider in its item range. Listening activities could be included.

The other book 'the path to English' does not have focus on speaking and listening. It only focuses on reading and writing.

15. **Culturally bias:** "The path to English" has a major fault which includes cultural biasness in the content and it shows the influence of American and Indian culture. And the book is taught in Bangladeshi School whose culture is much more different from these cultures.

Nevertheless, the EFT book focuses on the local culture with the lives of the people and culture of Bangladesh.

16. **Encourages learner to develop own learning strategy:** Both of the books need the guidance of the teachers and they are not designed to autonomous learning style.

17. **Flexibility:** The EFT book is not flexible and all the Government school must use this book in the classroom. So it is less flexible than the path to English book. One can choose the path to English or other book for his classroom teaching.

18. **Educational validity:** The EFT book intends to teach English language while providing some knowledge on different issues by which students can learn social interaction. It also tells some moral stories as for example; 'the farmer and the magic crow', 'Thirsty crow' etc. But it could be more moral and students actually do not learn much to be a good human being.

The other book is also commercially marketed and it does not consist of good educational validity including all aspects.

19. **Overall value for money:** In EFT book it is written "For Free distribution by the government of Bangladesh- Not for Sale". So it is totally free for all students irrespective of poor or rich. But the other book is highly expensive and it can only be affordable by rich people.

20. **Guidance:** The chairman of NCTB says in preface of EFT, class 4

"With modern strategy, Teacher Guide (TG) is introduced with a view to conducting the teaching-learning activities effectively. If the teachers teach the learners according to the directions of the TG



and ensure the learners' active participation, the learners can achieve the desired competencies in a more effective manner"

But in reality, teachers' guide is not available to many teachers at the same time if it is available to the teachers, they actually don't follow it. However they have guidance for learning strategy but the other book 'The path to English' does not provide any guidance book for the teachers, so it becomes random and implementation of the books is questionable.

After calculation of above criterion the total mark for English for Today book 4 is 79 and the path to English is 60. The comparative study between them shows that none of them are perfect but essentially they comprises some qualities while they also lack many fundamental things .

Table: 1

S. No	Criterion	English For Today ( EFT) Book 4			The Path to English			Differences between EFT and The Path to English
		1 <sup>st</sup> Evaluator	2 <sup>nd</sup> Evaluator	Average	1 <sup>st</sup> Evaluator	2 <sup>nd</sup> Evaluator	Average	
1	Objectives explicitly laid out in an introduction and implemented in the material.	2	3	2.5	3	3	3	-0.5
2	Availability	4	4	4	3	2	2.5	1.5
3	Approach educationally and socially acceptable to target community	5	4	4.5	1	1	1	3.5
4	Layout/graphics	3	3	3	4	3	3.5	-0.5
5	Accessibility	4	4	4	2	3	2.5	1.5
6	Appropriate visual material	3	3	3	3	3	3	0
7	Interesting topics	4	4	4	4	3	3.5	0.5
8	Varied topics and tasks for different level and learning style:	3	3	3	3	2	2.5	0.5



9	Clear Instructions	4	4	4	4	3	3.5	0.5
10	Systematic coverage of Syllabus	4	3	3.5	3	2	2.5	1
11	Content Clearly organized and graded	3	4	3.5	1	2	1.5	2
12	Appropriacy	4	4	4	2	2	2	2
13	Authenticity	5	4	4.5	3	3	3	1.5
14	Fluency practice in four skills	4	3	3.5	3	3	3	0.5
15	Culturally bias:	5	4	4.5	3	3	3	1.5
16	Encourages learner to develop own learning strategy	4	4	4	4	3	3.5	0.5
17	Flexibility	4	4	4	3	3	3	1
18	Educational validity	4	4	4	3	3	3	1
19	Overall value for money	4	3	3.5	3	3	3	0.5
20	Guidance	4	4	4	4	3	3.5	0.5
	Total	81	73	79	63	53	60	19

The table represents the comparative analysis of the both books in numbers.

#### V. Recommendations for English for Today:

- The picture of English for Today book should be colourful and attractive for the young learners. The present pictures can be taken into consideration.
- The topics for EFT book can be more interesting. So it needs research and more resource person's involvement to write the book.
- Audio or video materials can be included in the book for the adjustment of modern technology and better learning.
- The implementation of Book should be flexible so that the learners and teachers can have access to other books for creative learning.
- The book should also increase its Educational validity. It's not only for language learning, it also promises to improve the quality of Primary Education in Bangladesh

#### VII. Recommendation for the Path to English:

- The content and discussions must be culturally suitable for learning in the intended countries classroom. It should emphasize on local culture.
- The price of the book should not be so high so that it can accessible for every class.



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- The topics must be interesting for the young learners. It must be appropriate considering the level of the students.
  - The book should maintain the coherence between promises in the beginning and contents in the whole book. There is a wide gap between them. It should make clear the focusing skill and relevance with the rest. It should also provide enough guidance for the teachers.

**VII. Conclusion**

The study between the two books is thought provoking and a matter of deep concern. Somehow it is found our locally produced materials are much more acceptable than just bringing the books from other countries. We have to think about it and produce our own culturally appropriate materials.

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