

ANOMALIES IN ENGLISH LEARNING OF BANGLADESHI 8TH GRADE LEARNERS

Tanjila Rahman

Lecturer, Department of English
Asian University of Bangladesh
Email: densyfog@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

As far as teaching English is concerned in Bangladesh, two distinct standards are prevalent; National Curriculum and English Medium with different syllabuses. For Bengali Medium students Junior School Certificate Examination has made compulsory by the Government since 2011 which increases the importance of class VIII a lot more than before. On the other hand, English medium students don't have to sit for JSC examination but in terms of pragmatic use including speaking and writing, English medium students are doing far better than the students of national curriculum. Though English medium students have an extra-ordinary command over English but they often lack the traditional, cultural, moral and ethical knowledge of our country. Basically, this is a comparative study to analyze the current syllabuses of the both standards. Besides syllabus, teaching methods and classroom facilities are also important for attaining competency over English. For this purpose, two sets of questionnaires were used to collect data from the students and teachers to point out the strengths, weaknesses, problems of the both standards. In short, this empirical study is done based on concern of selected students and teachers and at the end of the paper some recommendations are suggested for removing the limitations of both streams.

Keywords: Syllabus; CLT; Listening & Speaking; Literature etc.

INTRODUCTION

Globalization has made English as lingua franca or global language as it is the common mode communication in every sector of life. The dominance of English is stemmed by British imperialism then prolonged by American influence and finally sustained by the Commonwealth countries. About 350 million people speak in English as their first language and about 430 million people use it as second language. English is considered as a foreign language in Bangladesh but by bearing its importance in mind, our government has made it compulsory in the academic syllabus. In Bangladesh, two distinct syllabuses are prevalent; National Curriculum and English Medium. In our National Curriculum Academic system, there are three levels; Primary, Secondary and Higher secondary. Though class VIII is still considered in Junior Level education but our govt. is planning to make it a part of primary level. The importance of class VIII was amplified by imposing Junior School Certificate since 2011. Besides, it is the last stage of combined education because in secondary level students have to choose different racks like Science, Arts and Commerce. English Version was introduced in Cadet Colleges in the late 1990s under National Curriculum for making the young learners more competent in English. Since 1979, Bangladesh Madrasah Education Board or "Alia Madrasah Education Board" started their activities independently and also a popular form of education in Bangladesh which follows the NCTB syllabus. Last but not the least, Bangladesh Technical Education starts their activities from class IX. The present scenario says that English

Medium students are more efficient than National Curriculum students; especially in terms of pragmatic use. So, the prime concern of this paper is to analyze 8th standard syllabuses of National Curriculum and English Medium Schools.

LITERATURE REVIEW

For any research review of related literature is essential because it opens the gate of available stock of knowledge. There are piles of empirical study about classroom teaching, implementation of CLT in the classroom, syllabus design and material selection etc but there are not too many works particularly about 8th grade. In “An Evaluation of TESOL Curriculum in Bangladesh: A Study of Students’ Perspective”, Ahmed (2014) stated that we need amendment or extension in the curriculum to the needs of the present context of Bangladesh. Basak (2008) explained that Process oriented syllabus focuses on the means by which communicative skills are brought about. Product oriented syllabus is a syllabus which focuses on the outcomes or ends of a language program. It is concerned with the ends and objectives. It is sometimes imposed by the administrative authority. Our syllabus is a sort imposed by the NCTB. This syllabus is mainly process oriented but teachers and students in their class room activities have made it product oriented syllabus. Dr. Farooqui’s (2014) article about “The Struggle to Teach in English: A Case Study in Bangladesh” concluded that the teachers in the urban area use both Bangla and English while teaching where as the teachers outside urban areas taught only in Bangla. Haider & Chowdhury (2012) conducted a study on “Repositioning of CLT from Curriculum to Classroom: A review of English Language Instructions at Bangladeshi Secondary Schools”. They found out that teachers prefer sticking to the teacher-centered approach of teaching as it gives them “command” over the students’ learning. Moreover some teachers admit the fact that the learners are not encouraged by the teachers to ask questions and they always feel insecure and helpless about making mistakes. Rahman & Karim (2015) remarked that culture is often considered as a barrier in creating a communicative form of English learning in EFL contexts. My focal point is to find out the strengths and weaknesses of the present syllabuses of Bangladesh so that the students of the both mediums will be benefitted.

Research Methodology: In this area of the paper, I’m going to discuss about the objectives, participants, techniques and the data collection procedure along with the survey questions and interview summary of the teachers and students.

Objectives of the Research: The objectives of this study are to analyze and compare the syllabuses of class 8 of National Curriculum and English Medium. In this regard, the paper explores the materials of the syllabuses, teaching techniques and learning style of the students and the physical environment of the classrooms.

Research Questions: Central research questions are as follows:

- a. What are the major differences between the syllabus of National curriculum and English Medium of class eight?
- b. What methods are used by the teachers of both mediums? Which one is more effective for teaching English?
- c. How does the classroom environment help to achieve the basic skills of English?

Significance of the research: This research paper is an overall picture of the differences between National Curriculum and English Medium syllabuses of class Eight. This study will be very helpful for the material designers to add some effective materials like literature in the textbook and to reshuffle the mark distribution of English 2nd Paper of NCTB. This undertaken research is a summary of the popular choice of the students' perceptions and the strategies taken by the teachers to teach the basic skills. Teachers and the authority of the respective schools will understand the necessity to furnish their classrooms with modern equipment.

Methodology

Participants: I, the researcher took interview of 30 teachers from nine Bengali medium schools both from Dhaka and Narayanganj. I also collected data from four famous English Medium schools. Moreover, I talked to the teachers individually to collect valid information about teaching methods. For checking classroom environment, I visited almost all the classrooms.

Limitations: I could not visit the schools outside of Dhaka division where the standard is the most vulnerable. In fine, more participants were necessary to figure out the statistical variable more accurately and the recommendations could be more justified.

Further studies: Reasons lie and further researches do needed to find out plethora of recommendations. However, the rural parts of Bangladesh would be the best area to work with. Moreover, the syllabus designers and text book writers should focus on the existing researches as I term of up to date materials for national curriculum and teaching methods and approaches should follow the same standard in all over Bangladesh.

DISCUSSION

The main reason of addressing the students of class Eight has already been mentioned. From my observation, three important factors can be marked as root causes of the low competency in English. They are:

- a) Syllabus and materials
- b) Teaching Methods
- c) Classroom facilities

In this part of the study, I am going to describe about the types of syllabus along with the definition. Analysis and comparison of both syllabuses are discussed in the later parts.

Definition of Syllabus: Before analyzing syllabus, it is wise to know the definition of syllabus. Learners often face problems in defining 'Curriculum' and 'Syllabus' as both the terms are closely connected. Syllabus is related with studying or teaching a course. This word originally derived from Greek word 'sittuba' means title parchment label or table of contents. Later, this word is taken in Latin as 'sittyba' and gradually transformed as 'sittybas'. Finally in the mid 17th century, this word is adopted in the store modern Latin vocabulary as 'Syllabus' means 'list' or concise table of headings of a discourse.



(“Syllabus” n.d.)

Generally syllabus is an academic paper containing course information, objectives, expectations etc. Hutchinson and Waters (1987:80) define “syllabus as a statement of what is to be learnt? It reflects of language and linguistic performance.” Richards and Rogers (2001) state that syllabus traditionally refers to “the form in which linguistic content is specified in a course method” (p. 25). Likewise, Nunan (1999) defines “syllabus as the subcomponent of a curriculum which is concerned with the selection, sequencing and justification of experiential and linguistic content, and makes a distinction between syllabus design and methodology. He defines syllabus design as being concerned with selecting, and sequencing linguistic content and methodology as being concerned with selecting and sequencing pedagogical procedures.” Again a syllabus can also be seen as a “summary of the content to which learners will be exposed” (Yalden.1987: 87). In 1800, the use of syllabus was very little and the same trend continues up to 1850. A dramatic growth is evident in 1900 and it rose upward till 1950. The next half century experienced a tremendous use of syllabus all over the world.

Use over time for: syllabus



There are two types of syllabuses; a. Product Oriented Syllabus and b. Process Oriented Syllabus

Product Oriented Syllabus: Popularly known as the Synthetic Syllabus, indicate that learners will gain knowledge as a result of instruction. Wilkins (1976: 2) described, “A synthetic language teaching strategy is one in which the different parts of language are taught separately and step by step so that acquisition is a process of gradual accumulation of parts until the whole structure of the language is built up.” A product-oriented syllabus focuses on things learnt at the end of the learning process (outcomes) rather than the process itself. Examples of the product oriented syllabuses are given below:

- The Structural Syllabus
- The Situational Syllabus
- The Notional/ Functional Syllabus

Process Orient Syllabus: A process-oriented syllabus or the analytical approach focuses on the pedagogical processes leading to the language outcomes and skills and processes involved in learning language. Process oriented syllabus shifted the concern of teaching from ‘content’ into

‘process’ of learning and ‘procedures’ of teaching. The types of Process Orient syllabus is given below:

- a) Task Based Syllabus
- b) Skill based syllabus
- c) Content Based Syllabus

Comparative analysis between Bengali Medium and English Medium Syllabuses: For drawing a comparative picture of these two streams, I selected thirty teachers from nine different schools of National Curriculum and eighteen teachers from four English Medium schools. For detailed analysis, I collected a syllabus of ‘Bangladesh International School and College’ and found out that around 33.34% teachers of National Curriculum are satisfied with the syllabus, 55.66% are not satisfied and 10% teachers have no comment. On the contrary, 55.56% teachers of English Medium Schools are satisfied, 27.78% teachers are not satisfied and the rest 16.67% teachers have no comment regarding the present syllabus.

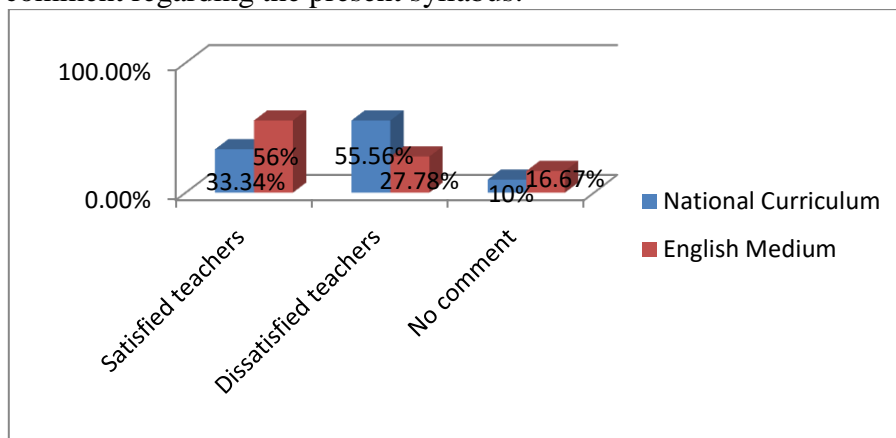


Figure-1: Teachers’ Statistics regarding present Syllabuses

Statistics says that about 33.34% teachers of National Curriculum have more than five years experiences and 23.34% teachers have more than ten years’ experience and only 26.67% teachers have less than five years experiences. Another part of the picture shows that 50% teachers of English Medium schools have more than five years experiences, 33.34% teachers have less than ten years and 16.67% teachers have more than ten years experiences. So, in the both mediums young teachers are more popular among the students. The marks distribution of the both papers of National Curriculum is given below:

English 1st Paper, Total Marks: 100

Content	Marks distribution
Seen Comprehension	
1. M.C.Q	1x5=5
2.Short Question	2x5=10
3.Summarizing	10
Unseen Comprehension	
4.Information Transfer	1x5=5
5. True/ False	1x5=5
6. Fill in the gaps with app. Words	1x5=5

7. Rearranging sentences	10
8. Gap filling with clues	.5x10=5
9. Matching sentences	1x5=5
Section B: Writing	
10. Dialogue writing	10
11. Paragraph writing	10
12. Completing story	10
13. Informal letter	10
Total=	100

English 2nd Paper, Total marks: 50

Section –A: Grammar: 30	
Contents	Marks Distribution
1. Articles	0.5×6=3
2. Prepositions	0.5×6=3
3. Substitution Table	4
4. Transformation	1×5=5
5. Passage Narration	4
6. Prefix and Suffix	0.5×8=4
7. Capitalization and Punctuation	3
8. Right form of verbs	0.5×8=4
Section-B: Writing (20)	
9. Formal letters/ Email	08
10. Composition	12
Total	50

The above mentioned syllabus is a blend of Notional/ Functional syllabus, Structural syllabus and the situational syllabus; so, it can be said that the present syllabus of National Curriculum is a product oriented syllabus. Half yearly syllabus with marks distribution of 8th Grade of **Bangladesh International School and College** is given below

English Literature

Contents	Types of Questions	Marks distribution
1. Macbeth	1. Word meaning	1x10=10
2. Hamlet	2. Broad questions	2x10=20
3. Comedy of Errors	3. Short questions	4x5=20
4. Poem: Stopping by woods on a snowy evening – Robert Frost	4. Short notes	2x5=10
5. Shall I compare thee to a summer's day—William Shakespeare	5. Summary	1x15=15
6. Animal Farm- George Orwell	6. Who said to whom in which context	3x5=15
7. Poem- To Autumn- by John Keats	7. Explanation	1x10=10
8. Poem- Death be not Proud by John Donne	Total:	100* 100 marks will be converted in 75
	Word meaning Questions/ Answer Short notes	1x5=5 5x2=10 5x2=10

Recommended Books

1. Tales from Shakespeare
2. Selected Poems, Book-8
3. Animal Farm

English Language:

Contents	Types of questions	Marks distribution
1. Book: Enjoying Grammar, Chapter: 1-13	Sec: B Grammar: Tense, Modals, Finite and Non-Finite Verbs, Voice	Total: 45
2. O Level Practice Papers by J. Millington Ward	Comprehension (Seen or Unseen); questions based on comprehension	30
3. O Level Test Papers (Directed and creative writing)	Directed writing- Interview, article, speech writing creative writing- Story, argumentative, essay etc	25 Total: 100 *100 marks will be converted to 75
Class Test	Grammar- Tense, Modals, Finite & non finite verb *Revision Test/ Surprise Test/ C.W/H.W	05+05+05+10=25

English Medium Syllabus is also a blend of Notional/ Functional syllabus, Structural syllabus and the situational syllabus but some Process Oriented items are present. The mentionable point is that English Medium students are studying literature in their syllabus and they are instructed to write broad questions, short questions, and explanations. This is how; their writing capability is gradually improving. English Medium students are learning English Language through Literature. On the other side of the coin, there is no literature section in the National Curriculum Syllabus of Bangladesh.

Comparative Strengths and Weaknesses of syllabuses: Let us find out the strengths and weaknesses of the both mediums step by step. The contents of the text book are considered

by 33.34% teachers as the most important strength of the syllabus of English First Paper. Near 26.67% teachers believe that the Unseen Comprehension is the best part of this syllabus. For 26.67 % teachers, use of vocabulary (Fill in the gaps, MCQ) is the vital part of the syllabus while 6.67% teachers mark paragraph as the key strength and 3.34% teachers consider rearrange of sentences as the strength. The rest 3.34% teachers believe that the marks distribution is the visible strength of the syllabus of English First Paper.

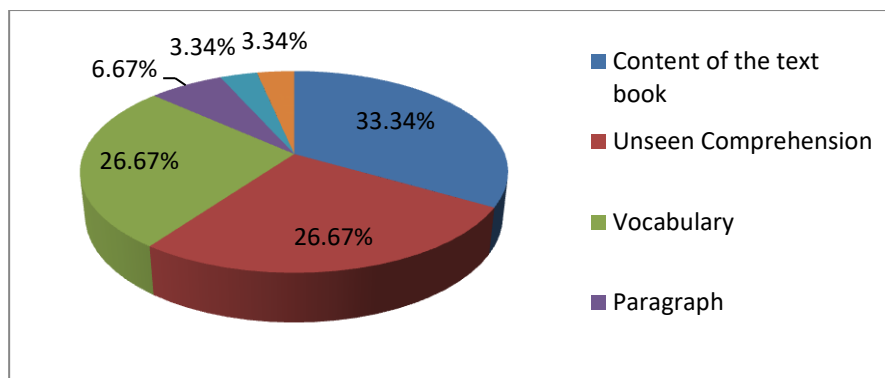


Figure-2: Strengths of English First Paper (National Curriculum)

On the contrary, English Medium syllabus is divided into two parts; literature and language. In literature, 44.45% teachers have the same opinion that prose is the most important part of EdExcel syllabus, 33.34% teachers consider poetry as the top most strength of this syllabus and 16.67% teachers believe that drama the best portion of the syllabus. The rest 5.54% teachers consider marks distribution the key fact of success of the performance of the English Medium Schools.

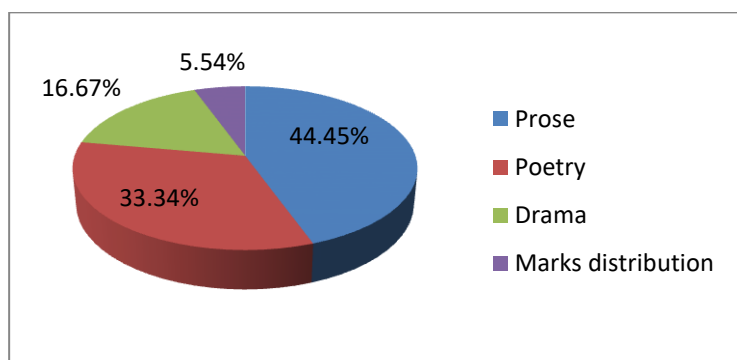


Figure-3: Strengths of English Literature Part (English Medium)

Materials: The text book of National Curriculum has a lot of references of Bengali Tradition and Culture. The Title of the First Unit is “A Glimpse of our Culture” which contains Lesson-1: Our Folk Song, Lesson-2: Nakshi Katha, Lesson-3, 4: Our Ethnic Friends (1, 2), Lesson-5: Bangladeshi Cuisine and Lesson-8: Pahela Baisakh. There is a reference of River Gypsies in Bangladesh in Lesson-3, Unit-7. There is no reference of Bengali Tradition and Culture in the syllabus of English Medium.

Newspaper Adaptations: Generally, newspaper adapted stories represent the socio-economic scenarios of the country. In the text book of NC, there are many newspaper adapted stories. For instance, “The Beginning” (Unit-5, Lesson- 1) is adapted from The Prothom Alo, published in June 17, 2005. The fourth Lesson of the same unit is about “A Man who Loves Trees” is also adapted from The Prothom Alo, June 17, 2005. In 8th unit, two lessons are

adapted from The Daily Star titling ‘News! News! News!’ As the English Medium follows the International Standard syllabus, it has no connection with the national affairs.

Literature: Although it is very little but some parts of literature are found in the text book of NC. There is a poem in lesson 8, unit 5 called “The Children’s Song” written by Rudyard Kipling. “Ode on Solitude” written by Alexander Pope is also found. In lesson seven of unit, there is a story about The Truthful Dove (3) is collected from *The Curious Book of Birds* by Farewell Brown. Last but not the least is Contemplation by John Carpenter is found in lesson 7 of unit 9. It is a matter of great sorrow that these little literature portion are not taught with importance. On the other side of the coin is that in English Medium syllabus, literature gets more priority than other comprehensions. Students are taught several master pieces of William Shakespeare Macbeth, Hamlet etc. Some selected poems are also taught like “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening”, “Shall I Compare thee to a Summer’s Day?”, “To Autumn” and “Death- Be not Proud.” Here, English is taught through literature which works here as a catalyst to develop the student’s own language.

Vocabulary Stock: Vocabulary is a very essential part in CLT based syllabus. In the textbook of National Curriculum, Unit 4 is all about vocabulary stock. The first lesson is about “Introducing a Table of Contents, Lesson 3 gives an account of using a dictionary, lesson 5 teaches how to look up words in dictionary, meaning of words, synonyms and antonyms. Vocabularies are vital in the context of Literature part of English Medium Syllabus and some marks are allotted for this section.

Informative Lessons: There are many informative lessons in the national Curriculum textbook. Unit six is about Bangkok Airport, Passport and Immigration, Announcements on Board, Fill in the Passport Form, Departure Card and The Tha Kha Floating Market. The whole unit of IX is about the Wheel, The History of Wheel, The Fastest Wheel on Earth, Taking off etc. In reading part of English Medium Syllabus, these informative lessons are absent.

Reading: In National Curriculum, the tools of evaluating reading passages are M.C.Q, True/ False, Information Transfer, Summarizing and Short questions. For reading part the students of Mastermind School have to scan, identify and note down information from a factual communication, analyze and summarize the specific information to achieve the global understanding of the text. National Curriculum syllabus should introduce new items in the question paper.

Morality: Completing story is the twelfth criterion of National Curriculum. In this section, the students are introduced with different morals like Unity is Strength; Failure is the Pillar of Success; Grasp All, Lose All; A Friend in need, is a Friend Indeed etc. In terms of morality, English Medium students are more enlightened than National Curriculum students as they have to study lots of literature. It is universally accepted that literature the best tool for teaching morality.

Writing: In the syllabus of Mastermind (English Medium) School, writing is divided into two parts; Directed writing and Creative writing. In Directed writing, students communicate key information appropriately, clearly, creatively, using accurate vocabulary, sentence structures, spelling grammar and punctuation, to achieve a specific purpose for a certain audience, in a particular situation. In that case, students will be presented with a task e.g. write a personal letter, formal letter, letter to the editor etc. In Creative writing, students

display their English Language skills and express their opinion, experience or imagination in an appropriate, clear and creative manner, using accurate vocabulary, sentence structure, spelling and punctuation. Students will be presented with a choice of five essay topics and must answer any one of the following: narrative, descriptive and argumentative.

Some evidence of academic writings is prevalent in the textbook of National Curriculum. There is a CV and an application in unit VIII. There is a sample of an informal letter in lesson 5 of unit III. For directed writing Paragraph is an effective tool. Around 33.34% teachers consider writing part is the most vulnerable area of the syllabus. The writing section has limited topics which have been continuing for a long time. For example, before fifteen to twenty years students have to learn Load Shedding, Tree Plantation, School magazines, Traffic Jam etc for paragraph which are still taught in 8th Grade. In this digital age we are moving very fast and new topics are coming into light; so, our students of NC should keep pace with modernizations and digitalization like the students of English Medium.

Listening: In English Medium Syllabus, one class in a week is taken as recreational class where they watch text oriented movies without English subtitles. It helps them a lot to understand English dialogues and British accents. In the N.C. text book, there are ten listening practices. They are Lesson 2-A, Unit-2; Lesson 7-B, Unit-3; Lesson 4-B, Unit-6; Lesson 6-B, Unit-6; Lesson 7-C, Unit-6, Lesson 3-C, Unit-7; Lesson 4-C, Unit-7; Lesson 3-C, Unit-8; Lesson 4-A, Unit-8; and finally Lesson 2-E, Unit-9. Unfortunately, these lessons only exist in the text book which has no use in the classroom.

Speaking: English Medium syllabus introduces the students with the real world language to apply in real life situations. So, the students are adept in using English in different situations. Only a few students of National Curriculum can use English in the real life situations. English Second Paper syllabus of National Curriculum is based on Grammatical/ Structural syllabus; so the students are fully de motivated of speaking and Task Based activities like project, presentation etc.

Grammar: In National Curriculum Syllabus, Grammar occupies a huge area. Transformation of sentences is about structure changing of sentences which helps for creative writing. From the survey, it is seen that 36.67% teachers believe that it is the most striking feature if this syllabus. 30% teachers have their concern for correction, 13.34% teachers consider suffix and prefix, 10% for formal letter and the rest 10% vote for marks distribution.

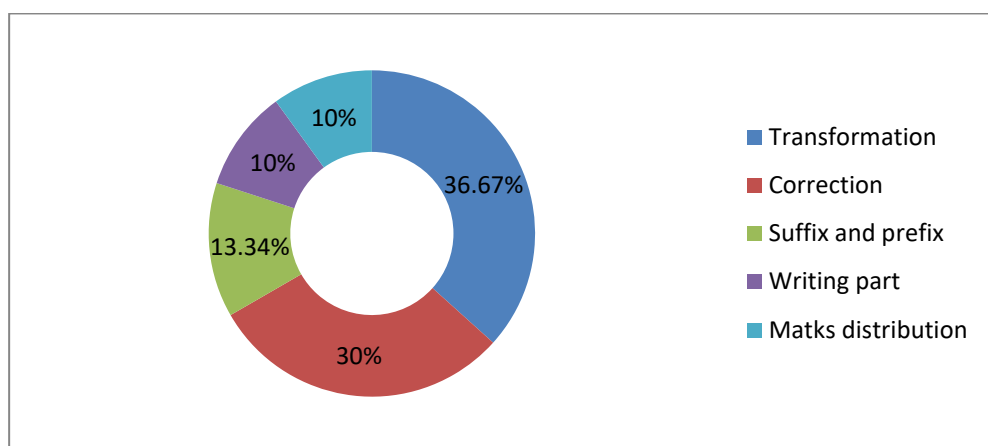


Figure-4: Strengths of English Second Paper (National Curriculum)

As far as English Medium syllabus is concerned, Grammar is also a vital area of importance. Students ought to read tense, finite and nonfinite verb, modals, voice, transformation etc in Language Part.

Marks Distribution of English Second Paper: Marks distribution of English Second Paper was halved for last few years. In the collected statistics, 50% teachers believe that it is an unwise decision to reduce the marks in to 50 because except class VIII the total number of English Second Paper is 100. It is one of the most vulnerable weaknesses of National Curriculum. 6% teachers believe that Capitalization and Punctuation is an unnecessary part of the syllabus. 26.67% teachers' opinion is that the vulnerable area of the syllabus is the absence of Creative writing for example, argumentative and narrative and 16.67% teachers have the same view that selection of overall grammatical items is a flaw of the syllabus.

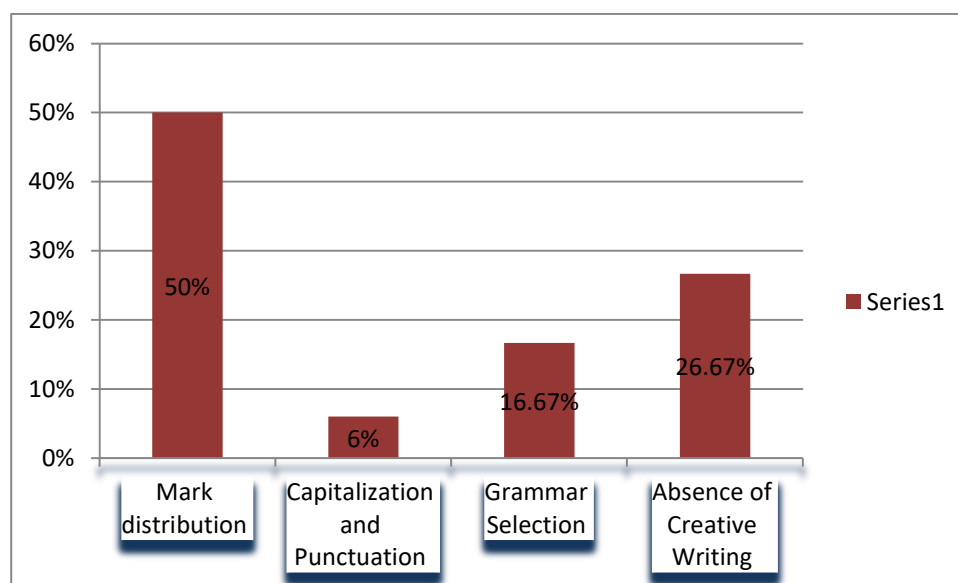


Figure-5: Flaws of English Second Paper (National Curriculum)

Test and Question Variation: In Bangladesh International School and College, there are different types of questions in the examinations. For example, broad questions, short questions, explanation. We can see that they have test variations like surprise test, revision test etc. These tests are very effective in the learning process of a student.

Language Difficulties of Literature: It has already been mentioned that some dramas of Shakespeare are taught in English Medium Schools. There is no argument about the difficulties of Shakespearean language. Small bracket students often find Hamlet, Macbeth, and Comedy of Errors as very complex. Little teenagers have been effeminate by the tragic themes. As a result, most of the students are become the victim of frustration and in long run engage in violence.

Length of the syllabus: The syllabus is huge for the English Medium students. The load is too heavy that they don't understand text properly. On the contrary, National Curriculum students have a tolerant pressure where is a room for adding some more contents. There must be a balance in length of syllabuses of both streams.

Teaching Method

Teaching method comprises the principles and methods used by teachers to enable student's competency. These strategies are determined partly on subject matter to be taught and partly by the capability of the learners. There are different methods for teaching like Grammar Translation Method, Communicative Language Teaching, and Situational Language Teaching etc. Since 1970, Communicative Language Teaching methodology has become popular among the English learners all over the world. According to Dr. Aria Rahman, professor of Dhaka University, 'CLT has become a buzzword', was introduced in the education system of Bangladesh in the year 1998-1999. The main purpose of introducing Communicative Language Teaching was to enable our students to use English in real life situation. The CLT method chiefly aimed to improve the language learners' communicative competence. HE Xiaotong (2014) says that it (CLT) pays more attention to the use of language and the learner's role, which provide learners more chances to use the language and practice their competence in dealing with communication in the real world. David Nunan (1991, p 78) lists five basic characteristics of Communicative Language Teaching:

1. An emphasis on learning to communicate through interaction in the target language.
2. The introduction of authentic texts into the learning situation.
3. The provision of opportunities for learners to focus, not only in the language but also in the learning process itself.
4. An enhancement of the learner's own personal experiences as important contributing elements to classroom learning.
5. An attempt to link classroom language learning with language activation outside the classroom"

The World Bank in their report titled "Bangladesh Education Sector Review" published in March, said the most common teaching method at secondary classes in the country is lecturing and reading textbooks and when it comes to interaction, teachers only ask closed 'yes' or 'no' questions to check whether the students have memorized the textbook information or not. Most teachers feel uncomfortable in adopting innovative educational approaches as they fear that using other approaches may result in poor performances in examinations. As a result, though the pass rates in public examinations are getting higher, a huge number of students are failing to master the desired competencies due to a flawed teaching system. A comparison between the teaching methods of National Curriculum schools and English Medium Schools is given below:

CLT Training: In terms of teaching methodology, the word CLT is more popular in National Curriculum than English Medium Schools. Around 73.53% teachers of National Curriculum have received training from government projects while only 16.67% teachers of English Medium have CLT training. Though the teachers of National Curriculum have CLT training but English Medium teachers have communicative competence as their medium of instruction is English.

Instruction Language: It is seen from the Statistics that only 13.34% teachers of NC instruct their lessons in English whereas 88.89% teachers of English Medium speak in English. 76.67% teachers of NC use both languages in the classroom and only 11.11% teachers of English Medium use both languages in the classroom. Using both languages in the classroom of National Curriculum has a thesis and antithesis. The thesis is that most of the students of our country are very weak in English. If a teacher delivers lectures fully in English, most of the students may not be able to follow him. The antithesis is that if a teacher interprets all the messages in Bengali, the students may show reluctance to find out the English interpretation of the text.

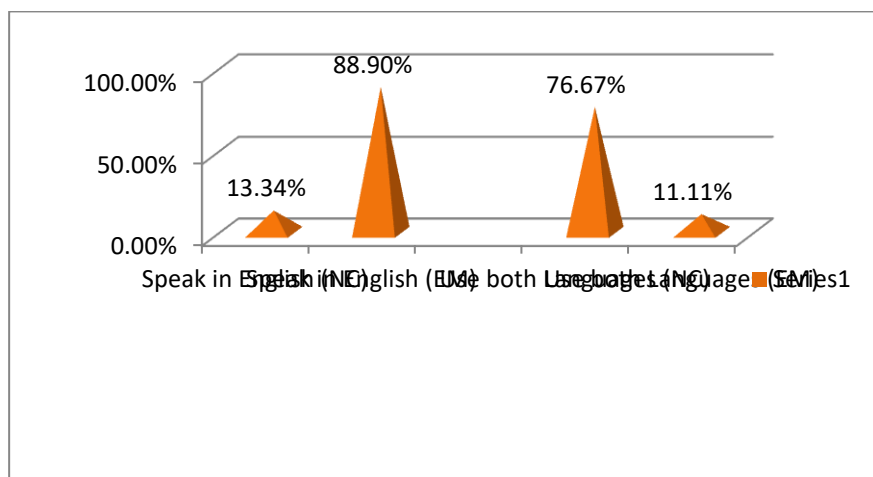


Figure-6: Use of Language in the classroom of N.C. & E.M

Student's responses: It is very unfortunate that in National Curriculum only 30% students can respond in English while the rest 70% students are unable to use this language but about 95% students of English Medium Schools can communicate in good English.

Method of Grammar Teaching: There is a general debate about how to teach Grammar; Rules + Example or Examples + Rules. Still 83.34% teachers of N.C. teach Grammatical Rules + Example and give a few examples outside the text book. The statistics show that the scenario is same in the English Medium Schools also. Around 77.78% teachers follow the above mentioned formula to teach Grammar.

Presentation and Projects: In terms of teaching speaking skill, presentation is a very helpful tool. It helps students to transform into bold speakers and project enables them to develop writing skill as well as group work helps them to work together by sharing views and ideas. Approximate 43.34% teachers of National Curriculum informed that they have never involved their students in these activities. Only 27.78% teachers of English Medium have engaged their students in presentations, projects and group work.

Vocabulary Stock: Linguist David Wilkins argued that: "without grammar little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed." In the text book of N.C, some key words are given at the top of every lesson. Only 43.33% percent teachers teach vocabularies after every class. Another, 56.67% teacher avoid vocabularies. As the teachers supposed to use textbook pictures, visual aids for teaching new vocabularies but 90% teachers do not take any audio or visual help. Moreover, the students learn new vocabularies from the teacher's Bengali explanations.

Warm up Activities: About warm up activities like using pictures or games, teachers of both streams show the same negligence. Only 33.34% teachers of English Medium Schools and 26.67% teachers of National Curriculum start classes with warming up activities. 66.67% teachers of English Medium claimed to start class with motivational words while 73.33% teachers of N.C. are comfortable to start lessons directly.

Classroom Facilities: In order to make 'Digital Bangladesh', the government has taken many projects to digitalize the Educational Sector. Multimedia equipped classroom is one of them. Ismat Ara Mamataz (5 March, 2017) mentions that Access to information (A2i)

arranges teachers' training on ICT, Digital Content Development in the meantime, arranges Digital Content Development Workshop, Model Content Development by the teachers for Shikkhok Batayon so that all teachers can collect subject based contents. There are 23000 multimedia classrooms in secondary schools. Let us compare the classroom facilities between the both mediums.

Modern Equipments: 46.67% teachers of national curriculum have informed that their classrooms are well equipped with multimedia and sound system for listening practices and 53.37% teachers have reported that they have no modern equipments. They have also informed that they hardly use these equipments for making their lessons interesting to the students. On the contrary, 77.78% teachers have informed that their classrooms have modern facilities and they use them regularly.

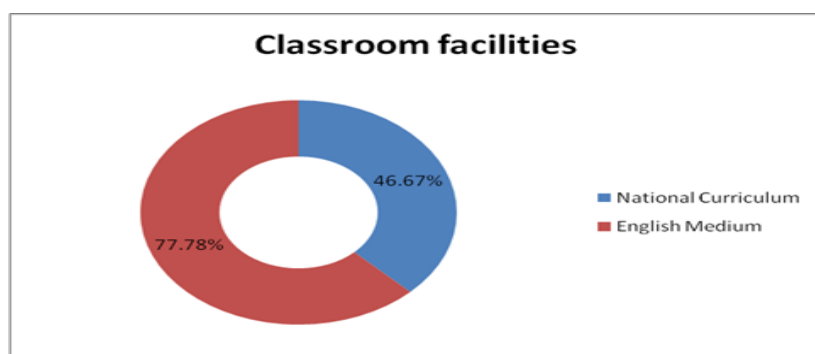


Figure-7: Multimedia facilities

Classroom Environment: In most of National Curriculum schools do not the air conditioners. As a result students suffer a lot from hot and cold weather. On the other hand, most of the English Medium Schools have temperature controlling machine. So, the students can concentrate on their studies without any disturbance. There is no point to deny that English Mediums students pay high amount of tuition fees where the Government and private National Curriculum schools are taking a minimum fee for academic purpose. So, it is very easy for English Medium Authority to provide all the modern facilities which is an unbearable to the government.

Problems faced by teachers: In some cases, it is found out that the existing syllabus, teaching method and modern facilities etc. all are present but also most of the teachers fail to attain the desired results. The following problems are faced by the teachers of both mediums:

- 9.1. Most of the students have a little command over English.
- 9.2 Almost half of the students are inattentive.
- 9.3 If a teacher delivers his lecture in English, most of the students of National Curriculum do not understand him but they remain silent. They are afraid of asking questions because of having poor speaking skill.
- 9.4 In the most of the Bengali Medium School the class duration varies from 35 to 40 minutes. To some teachers, the class duration is too short to make the students understand.
- 9.5 Students are unwilling to learn the writing part. They love to memorize composition, formal letters, paragraphs, completing stories etc. rather to develop their own language.
- 9.6 It is a common tendency of one fourth of the students to copy from other students.
- 9.7 Many students along with the guardians are hankering after marks. They don't bother about learning rather they want to get good grades.
- 9.8 Some of the students can't remember anything like composition or paragraph.

9.9 Students make too much noise in the classroom.

9.10 At present, many students have smart phones. They are addicted of games like Candy Crash Saga, Temple Run, and Pokémon etc. They don't concentrate rather love to disturb teachers in the class room.

Recommendations: The aim of this paper is to find out some up-to-date recommendations so that out the students of both streams can be benefitted.

Updating Syllabus: It is the high time to upgrade the syllabus of National Curriculum. There are plausible scopes of improving the present syllabus. Standard Grammar books like Raymond & Murphy can be followed. More additional and references books can be added. Many students report that they often fail to get a good grade in the examination because of unseen comprehension. In this context, NCTB can recommend an official reference book. On the other hand, English Medium students should be taught Bangla tradition, culture, norms, values etc.

Literature: Literature should be added in the syllabus of class eight of National Curriculum. Collie and Slater (1987: 3-6) support the inclusion of literature in the language classroom as it provides valuable authentic material, develops personal involvement and help contribute to readers' cultural as well as language enrichment.

Listening and Speaking: For attaining listening and speaking skills, we should take an effective step. Marks distribution system of English first paper should be reshuffled. At least, 10 marks should be given for listening and speaking.

Marks distribution of English Second Paper: Marks distribution policy of English Second Paper of National Curriculum must be reordered. Except class eight all the classes have 100 marks in English Second Paper. I recommend revising the marks distribution plan of English Second Paper. Some teachers inform that they want to include Phrase and Idioms in the grammar list.

Creative Writing: Directed writings should be replaced by creative writings. New topics should emerge for paragraph, composition, dialogue, application etc.

Installation of Multimedia: More multimedia is needed to keep pace with the modern advancement. Government should ensure about the practical use of multimedia in the classroom.

Proper implementation of CLT: Most of the teachers of National Curriculum are CLT trained in our country. However, it is a matter of great sorrow that they do not practice CLT in the classroom. A class monitoring cell can be formed for proper implementation of CLT.

Introduction of Presentation & Project: The conventional system of half yearly exam should be replaced. Topic based presentation should be given to the students so that they can build presentation content and achieve fluency over English.

CONCLUSION

From the above discussion, it is proved that the current syllabus of 8th Grade of National curriculum needs a lot of improvements. On the contrary, English medium syllabus is

appropriate for attaining basic skills but the students are ignorant about their native language, literature, tradition etc. The huge gap between these two streams is a kind of binary opposition. The dire need of this present crisis is to make a balance for maintaining an equivalent standard in the academic syllabuses of 8th grade of Bangladesh. It is a matter of joy that our Govt. along with many NGOs is working together for ensuring quality education in Bangladesh. I wish and expect that within a decade the huge gap between these two mediums will be minimized and almost all students will be competent in English.

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