

**“An Exploratory Study on the Integration of Speaking Activities in EAP
course book (English for Today, Class 8) in Bengali medium schools:
Expectations and Reality”**



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course book (English for Today, Class 8) in Bengali medium schools:
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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

I hereby declare that this thesis is the student's own work and effort. All sources of information incorporated here have been duly acknowledged. This thesis has been submitted with my approval.



07.06.21

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DECLARATION

This thesis is a presentation of my original research work. Wherever contributions of others are involved, every effort is made to indicate this clearly, with due reference to the literature, and acknowledgement of collaborative research and discussions.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates on the effectiveness of speaking activities given in the textbook ‘English for Today’ for class 8 Bengali medium students designed by following Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach by National Curriculum and Textbook Board and Ministry of Education Bangladesh. Speaking skill is one of the most important part of language learning and as English is a global language, speaking English helps to create identity of an individual which became mandatory for everyone not only to communicate but in every aspect of life. This study also pays attention on the learners’ expectation and the reality of the textbook. The purpose of this research paper is to seek out if the textbook ‘English for Today’ has adequate speaking activities for class 8 students and the researcher endeavor to discover if those speaking activities fulfilled the need and expectations of the learners. This mixed method research surveyed on 90 participants from different age group and different region of Bangladesh and 6 graduate participants who have more experience and can do their need analysis were interviewed for this research. Besides, this exploratory study is supposed to give a clear understanding on the learners’ experience on the textbook learning and how learners from different age group face challenges, their English speaking capability at that level and henceforth despite reading the textbook ‘English for Today’. The outcome of this study shows that the textbook ‘English for Today’ for class 8 contains inadequate speaking activities and the book has significantly failed to accomplish its target and learners need although to some extent the textbook has reached its target. Additionally, some suggestion on the speaking activities collected from the experienced learners to update the textbook according to their need, interest and expectation.

Keywords: EAP, speaking activity, teaching English, language, learning, teaching method, Bengali medium classroom, Bangladeshi schools, English classroom, learners of class 8, English for Today course book, CLT, classroom challenges, learning strategies.

INTRODUCTION

As an international language, English is the most demanding and dominating ‘global’ language since British colonial era and in every sector of life it has become a need for human to communicate in formal and informal contexts. We can call it not only a language but a ‘brand’ or an ‘attitude’ that snatch all the attention. It is mentionable that proficient English speakers have more opportunities and demand especially in job market in any ESL countries. Likewise, in Bangladesh, English has gotten the most respect as a second language and when social status, profession, impression or value comes, people become racist and favorable towards English speakers. Siddique (2004) and Hasan (2011) agreed to the same conception that English is the second language in Bangladesh while conducting their research on ESL teaching in Bangladesh. Like the every other countries, English is a mandatory subject for Bangladeshi school students. But the problem starts when we realize that Bangladeshi schools are teaching English as a subject instead of taking it as a language learning course. In Bangladeshi schools, the course book for English learning is fixed following by many years which mainly has activities for writing and reading rather than giving equal importance to all four language skills. Even in Bengali medium classroom, teachers also do not give importance to listening and speaking skills which is one of the major cause of being weak in these two skills. Siddique (2004) claimed in his research paper that in Bangladesh, to teach a subject, it’s not required for the teachers to have special academic background on that subject so here we can guess that it can also have an impact on the learning process of the students because of lack of skill, strategies of teaching and knowledge of the teacher. Another reason for writing skill practice so frequent is as in large classes especially in government schools, the other three language skill practice is quite tough to test each and every student and give especial attention to their mistakes for the teachers as because of class duration and the quantity of the students because the size of the class matters while giving language instructions. Sinha (2001) suggested that language classroom needed limited number of learners. If the teachers try to practice the listening and speaking skills in the classroom, at a certain point they would fail to develop these listening and speaking skills because of the lack of activities, assessment planning and to examine the learners directly. Ministry of Education in Bangladesh and national curriculum and textbook board (NCTB) has

followed CLT approach to design '*English for Today*' (Eft) books for EAP classrooms for primary, secondary and HSC students from Bengali medium schools. Richards and Rodgers (1986) stated that materials for English language teaching play an important role to facilitate the process of learning. Previously the textbook '*English for Today*' was designed by following grammar translation method before introducing CLT in Bangladesh. (NCTB, 2012). From many years they're using the same contents in the textbook with same rules and even most of the contents are similar to junior textbooks so here the learners are not getting comprehensible input (Krashen, 1982) instead they're practicing similar uninteresting activities again and again following the textbook which is interrupting them to upgrade their skills.

Shahidullah (2001) claimed in his research paper that, '*English for Today*' book established by curriculum board only has the activities to practice comprehension and grammar. While practicing speaking in the classroom, most of the time students are not interactive or friendly to each other because of the lack of proficiency and confident so the activity becomes discouraging and uninteresting for them. Here again we can relate the model '*Affective filter hypothesis*' by Krashen (1982) where he described that when our filter is high with our emotion like fear or nervousness, it interrupts our second language learning. Svetlana, Timina and Butler's (2011) conducted their research on graduate students in Taiwan university and discovered students' hesitation and fear of speaking, lack of enthusiasm, memorization and sensitive topics discourage them to speaking in English. Unfortunately in Bangladesh, English is only taught and practiced in classroom so learners get very less exposure to this language. Although the board book has several kind of speaking activities but teachers and learners are far away from success to get speaking proficiency which causes them to use Bengali in ESL classroom so that students can communicate easily with confident and without any fear. Therefore in Bengali medium classrooms, teachers use Bengali as the medium of instructions not matter if it's and ESL class or any other subject. School teachers are more focused on teaching grammar which helps learners to develop their writing skill and create their habit to memorize the formulas and rules of grammar but because of lack of speaking practice, students find it difficult to become fluent English speaker. Bygate (1987) has argued in the book that that in EFL and ESL learning countries, speaking skill is most underrated and ignored.

Crystal (2003) demonstrated in his book ‘English as a global language’ about language changes and varieties of English since 1960s which introduced us with the term ‘new Englishes’ where he compared this term new Englishes with dialects which we can understand but the main differences are on international scale. As per David Crystal’s statement, English is own by no one as every country has adopted this language and made it their own so there are so many varieties of English all over the world. Which introduces the term ‘world Englishes’. English became the lingua franca or the medium of communication.

The researcher is a student of English department doing her masters in Applied Linguistics and TESOL. She has done her dissertation on “An exploratory study on the integration of speaking activities in EAP course book (Class 8) in Bengali medium schools: Expectations and Realities” where she has explored and talked about the speaking activities provided in English for academic purpose (EAP) course book from class 8 in Bengali medium schools. Researcher’s interest was to know if the course book providing enough speaking activities to meet the need of the learner to make them proficient in speaking English.

1.1 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

In order to conduct the research, the researcher tried to explore the available English speaking activity in the textbook from Bengali medium class eight named as ‘English For Today’ established by NCTB. This exploration was backed up by a questionnaire survey and interview on experienced students in which the researcher tried to investigate whether this English speaking activities are meeting the needs of the target learner group of learners or not. The other intention behind this research paper is to find out if the expectations from the book and reality of the book are comparable or not.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. To what extent the speaking activities in ‘English for Today’ meet the need of the learners? Which teaching method is dominant in teaching speaking in English for Today?
2. What are the problems the teachers and the students face in executing speaking activities in a Bangladeshi ESL classroom?
3. What can be done to integrate authentic speaking activities in the book?

Chapter – 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

English for Academic Purpose (EAP)

The full form of EAP refers to English for academic purpose. According to Gillett (2011), English for Academic Purposes - refers to the language and associated practices that people need in order to undertake work or study in English medium higher education. The EAP course aims to help students to learn some of the linguistic and cultural – mainly institutional and disciplinary - practices involved in studying or working through the medium of English. Gillett also stated that the role of an EAP course designer is to discover what learners' need to do in their courses and assist them to achieve their goal. An EAP course mainly focuses on the writing process for example, planning, organizing presenting, re-writing and proof-reading. Teaching academic and subject specific language is the main target of an EAP course including language practice such as writing introductions and summarizing the text.

Basak (2016) discovered through her research paper on university students that students' attitude towards EAP courses are mostly negative as they are not bothered about the necessity to have proficiency in English language speaking. This is quite a common problem when students find a learning environment not interesting which leads them to have the tendency to pass the course rather learn something from the course. Not only the students, guardians also pressurize them to get a good result instead of helping them to learn and practice. According to Diane (2009), EAP is a part of ESP which is shaped for the need of the learners at every stage. It becomes easier for the learners when they get the course of their demand to get proficiency in speaking English for any specific purpose.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

Communicative language teaching is a teaching approach for second language learning which aims to make learners able to communicate in their target language which is following from many years in ESL classrooms. According to Richards (2006), CLT was established in 1970s

which has the influence on language teaching practice around the globe. The goal of communicative language is to teach communicative competence. CLT gives more importance to the communicative functions than the structure and intends to communicate mainly in target language. Hunter and Smith (2012) investigated the articles published in UK-based ELT Journal and demonstrated how ELT professional discourse was influenced by the communicative ideas and terminology in the years up to 1986. Harmer (2007) shares his opinion which says that the idea of CLT is not definable and addressed it as a wide “umbrella” term to describe learning stages which intent to develop the communicative ability of students in contrast to ‘teaching which is aimed more at learning bits of language just because they exist – without focusing on their use in communication’. (Harmer, 2007).

Littlewood (2013) stated that the communicative aspects of language is about what we learn which means it suggests while learning a language primarily we learn language functions, not the structure of that language. So the language functions get major attention while designing a syllabus. Richards and Rodgers (2001) claims that the goal of CLT is to make communicative competence and to develop strategies to teach all four language skills which “acknowledge the interdependence of language and communication”. Hence, CLT gives importance to the communication process instead of having knowledge on language forms. So the learners have to play important roles in the learning environment and one of the central role is being able to ‘negotiate’ which will help them to develop their communicative ability and speaking proficiency in that target language. Ansarey (2012) and Rhalmi (2009) shares same thought on their research paper that the contribution of learner in the classroom is very important to make them independent learner so they must interact in the classroom with the group members. In Bengali medium classroom, teachers also suggest learners to interact in the classroom but somehow they are unable to create the environment where learners can share their thought without any fear. This is a big failure to both teachers and students to develop communicative competence.

Teacher-student interactional pattern in Bangladeshi EAP classroom

In Bangladeshi EAP classrooms, usually teacher-student interaction happens in their native language rather than using the target language which could help students to get some exposure for more practice in real life situations. As a result, students are less confident while using

English to communicate or share their ideas. Most of the time teachers do not use ice breaking techniques to make the learners comfortable in that learning environment, instead they directly starts teaching which makes them disengage from the class. Here power distance and cultural boundary also comes while interacting with teachers which creates nervousness while sharing their ideas especially while using nonnative language.

Irena (2011) reveals in her journal that English education aims to improve learners' academic and professional capability in such way that students get the ability to communicate effectively in academic and professional contexts. Teachers of EAP needs to be well skilled enough and must do their research on the learners so that they can get an idea about their competency level to guide them for proper knowledge and formulating texts so they can 'actively engage with the disciplines' (Dudley-Evans and St John, 1998). Basak (2016) claimed in her research paper that grammar is always taught deductively when grammar is the content in an EAP class rather than following inductive method for contextual grammar teaching which is quite visible in activities given in English books from Bengali medium schools. According to Hamid & Baldauf (2008), in English classroom students' interaction and class participation is very important through class activities such as pair work or group discussion or even individually. Although because of time management and poor arrangement of activities and teaching style, students do not get that exposure to practice in classroom especially to speak. Richards and Rodgers (1998) stated that teaching materials plays an important role and create great impact on learners to learn language. Kabir (2012) claimed in his paper that students get good grades in exams but they cannot speak English naturally or write correctly. Rahman (2018) stated in his research paper that 'although students get good grade in exams but in their daily life, they cannot speak English naturally or spontaneously. Rahman's research also shows that students are more dependable on guide books instead of 'English for Today' textbook and he also discovers that national examination format follows 'writing' and do not have any particular format to examine listening and speaking.

Most often we've seen in Bangladeshi classroom that the tasks are mainly based on reading and writing rather than speaking and listening. Even both teachers and learners are comfortable in reading writing tasks so the other two language skills remain poor. According to Gillett (2011), learners should know the strategies to comprehend oral and written texts and to have the ability to write essays and give presentations and for that, EAP courses requires to have learners knowledge on academic culture and they must know the difference between "academic culture

and the culture where they are studying”. This is a major problem when our cultural background has influence on our learning. After identification of learners’ ultimate need, EAP course designers need to understand learners’ current situation and past knowledge and for that they have to examine learners’ knowledge and performance.

However, EAP teachers are required to have the ability to analyze language and context and to identify learners need so that they can design material in a way which is ideal for that context and need of the learner. Sinha (2001) discovered in his study that Bangladeshi school teachers are unable to use energetic ways while teaching English. As a result learners get disengaged from the class as they find it boring to learn speaking English. In Bangladesh, there is a shortage of well skilled English teachers. Siddique (2004) claimed in his article that in Bangladesh, teachers are allowed to teach in academic field without any professional training. Bangladeshi school administration never gave importance to examine speaking skill of students. Thus, course teachers do not give importance to this speaking skill so they include very few speaking activities in the syllabus while designing the course.

CLT and the practice of speaking activities in Bangladeshi schools

Speaking activities in Bangladeshi ESL classroom for high school students are more grammar focused and usually similar to junior classes which would not help learners to make practice for real life situations. Students get very less exposure to practice English speaking. According to Canale (1983), communicative competence means to have knowledge and skill to communicate. Billah (2012) revealed in his study that CLT was introduced in Bangladeshi education system in 1998-1999 so that students gain the ability to use English in their real life situations. Rajshahi University Professor Shahidullah (2001) claimed that communicative language teaching does not mean using incorrect English rather it focuses on the fluency leading to the accuracy. Hamid (2011) discovered through his research on ‘the overall English proficiency of rural Bangladeshi school learners’ that the main problem in rural education system to teach English is the socioeconomic factor. Majority of the people of Bangladesh are facing poverty where they don’t find the need of English. For that reason they are far away from all the facilities and opportunities.

Selim and Tasneem (2011) talked about the ELT teachers of Bangladesh and stated that the moment CLT was introduced in Bangladeshi education system; English teachers were totally

against it as they were following the traditional method of teaching English and were not ready to change their process of teaching. Chowdhury and Shaila (2011) shares the similar opinion in their article that the main reason to avoid practicing English is the shyness of the learner. Now this is obvious that when we learn a new language, it is uncomfortable for us to practice that language in such hostile environment especially in Bengali medium schools where students are laughing at each others' mistake instead of being supportive to each other, language learning is impossible in such situation. Sharmin (2014) stated that to control our anxiety and exam oriented mentality, learners should have more exposure to English. The more they can communicate in the target language, the more they overcome the shyness and fear. That way they can focus more on learning the language instead of focusing on their grade. According to begum & Islam (2017), Bangladeshi teachers are not trained enough so competency on CLT in English classroom is difficult to show. Haq (2014) claimed that in English classroom, students are shy and their lack of confident demands teacher- centered classroom for Bengali medium students.

According to Lightbrown and Spada (2013), as communicative language teaching is fluency focused so it avoids correcting the mistake instead CLT helps to develop the fluency at first then gradually learners become able to identify and correct their mistakes by their own. Khan (2007) shares in his research that, the teachers' assumption on the teaching proper use of grammar can make the learners able to communicate properly in English so they focuses only on grammar and ignore other language skills, as a result learners develop their writing skill but they fail to develop their English speaking skill. Hence the purpose of using communicative language teaching in Bangladeshi education system remains unsuccessful to teach the language. CLT has a great practice in academic field, even in teachers training academies but there is no exact document of how much success CLT got over the past years.

In Bangladesh, urban area students getting more opportunities to develop their speaking skill comparing to rural area school students because of the quality of education teachers providing in the classroom are lot better than rural school along with the availability of technology, internet and environment. Rural students do not get the verbal support from the teachers and students both. There is a socio-economic factor comes in rural school education which is the major cause why rural students are not compatible to the urban students. But still in both area, learners are failure to get speaking proficiency in English as they do not feel the need for English so they are more focused on their grades.

Learning strategies to develop speaking skills in Bangladeshi schools

Basak (2016) revealed in her research paper that the teachers she interviewed suggested that classes should be learner-centered and interactive. They have stated if they get chance to be involved in classes actively, they can practice English more and can develop their skill. But in reality, Bangladeshi mainstream school classrooms are more teacher-centered where students are instruct to communicate with the teacher and very few time they get the chance to do interact with the classmates. For that reason most of the time they stay quite in the class as they hesitate to interact directly with the teachers. Chowdhury and Shaila (2011) declared in their research that “English is one of the most fearsome and difficult subject to teach”.

Need analysis for the school students of Bangladesh

According to Jordan (1997), the initial stage to design a course or syllabus is needs analysis. Teachers need to have the knowledge on what learners need from the course in order to get success in classroom learning. Andy Gillett (2011) discovers that EAP course objective pays attention to the aim of the student which is important to make the learning process easier and more engaging. Therefore, appropriate teaching strategies, classroom activities for fluency development and learners’ equal participation is needed in order to learn the language. Teachers also should examine the current knowledge of the learners and measure the competency level of the learner in order to decide activities to teach English.

Sharmin (2014) conducted her research paper where she revealed that in her survey most of the learners claims that they do not get chance to practice in the classroom but the teachers claimed that there is no sufficient time to let the learners practice in the classroom. So here the noticeable result of her study shows that teachers are unable to manage the classroom activities and learners’ willingness. But it is possible for a well trained teacher to follow proper teaching strategy and organize the activity on given time so that they can make use of learners’ willingness in the learning environment and make it engaging for them to practice and develop their skill.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research paper is based on a mixed method research which includes both qualitative semi structured interview and quantitative survey. Although this paper is mainly dominated by the quantitative survey because of the large group of participants. At first researcher collected the NCTB textbook ‘English For Today’ (for class 8) to identify and measure the speaking activities given in the book so that the book data can be useful for survey and interview. To collect quantitative data, the researcher made a survey questionnaire which contains 15 close ended questions including 8 multiple choice questions and 7 likert scale questions using 5 point scale. All of the questions were based on speaking activities given in ‘English For Today’ (for class 8) book, learners’ need, expectations, reality of the book and classroom learning process. Researcher used Google form as a research tool to create the survey questionnaire and forwarded that via emails and social media to reach participants easily and to collect data faster within two days. Researcher tried to spread the survey all over the country so she used her networking and got responses from the students from different region of Bangladesh but majority of the participants are from Dhaka. In the survey, 90 people took participation who all are from Bengali medium background. Among them, 50 participants are female and 40 male participants. Participants are from 16 to 30 years old. While analyzing the quantitative data, researcher took 11 most important questions among 15 for better outcome of the study. To collect qualitative data, researcher created an interview questionnaire which contains 4 open ended semi structured questions under 4 different themes: 1) learning experience, 2) challenges, 3) Inadequacy of teaching method and lastly 4) recommendation; and took interview of 6 people via zoom and recorded the interview. For a better understanding and to get a broad opinion on the questions, researcher explained each and every question to the interviewees in Bengali and conducted the interview session in Bengali language as the participants were not comfortable to talk in English and they might give straight answer to the questions which wouldn’t help the researcher to know about their thoughts. Among 6 participants, 5 are female and 1 male participant and all of them are 25-26 years old. The main reason for taking senior participants in both survey and interview is, as an experienced learner they are able to identify their need and can explain better what is missing from the book and what didn’t match their expectations so that is a good cause to get a

better outcome and the reason for taking secondary level students because they are more connecting to class 8 so they can relate better. As class 8 students will not be able to identify their need at that point so that would not give a proper result to this research. For the data analysis process of the quantitative survey, researcher did not clarify all the questions given in the survey questionnaire and only took important ones to interpret.

3.1 Participant Details:

The participants who gave qualitative interview, also took participation in quantitative survey. Qualitative research was based on the participants' past experience, the challenges they've faced, book activities and some suggestions from them which they think should be included in the book. Among the 6 participants who gave qualitative interview, p1 is a 25 years old female participant who is MBA student studying in ULAB and also working for a private company. P2 is a 25 years old male participant who completed his graduation from ULAB and working for Prothom Alo news paper. P3 is a 25 years old female participant who is an undergraduate student. P4 is a 25 years old female participant who completed her graduation from BUP and working for a private company as an intern. P5 is a 25 years old female participant who is doing her MA in ULAB and also teaching in a private English medium school. Lastly, p5 is a 26 years old female participant who has recently completed her MA and teaching in a private English medium school. All of them are from Bengali medium background. Researcher took 10 minutes long interview from each participant.

Quantitative survey **participants' age group** – among 90 participants, 13 participants are 16 years old, 5 participants are 17 years old, 8 participants are 18 years old, 1 participant is 19 years old, 5 participants are 20 years old, 5 participants are 21 years old, 5 participants are 22 years old, 6 participants are 23 years old, 12 participants are 24 years old, 11 participants are 25 years old, 6 participants are 26 years old, 7 participants are 27 years old, 1 participant is 28 years old, 2 participants are 29 years old, 4 participants are 30 years old. **Educational qualification of the participants** – In the survey, 40 participants are undergraduate students, 9 graduate students, 6 masters student, 1 LLM student, 5 participants are from H.S.C 1st year, 2 B.Sc. students, 6 participants are from H.S.C 2nd year, 14 participants completed their H.S.C., 7 SSC candidate of 2021. **Academic institutions of the participants** – 45 participants are from ULAB, 7 participants are from Shaheed Police Smriti College, 1 participant is from BUBT, 2 participants

are from DIU, 1 participant is from CUET, 1 participant is from EWU, 1 participant is from BRAC university, 2 participants are from NSU, 1 participant is from BSS, 4 participants are from BAF Shaheen college, 1 participant is from Shaheed Bir Uttam Lt Anwar Girls College, 1 participant is from Bhashantek school and college, 1 participant is from Bangla college, 1 participant is from Govt. college feni, 1 participant is from Pilot high school feni, 2 participants are from Nirjhor Cantonment Public School & College, 2 participants are from Adamjee college, 1 participant is from Tejjao college, 1 participant is from Lalmatia Mohila college, 1 participant is from Noakhali govt. girls high school, 1 participant is from Mizmizi Painadi Rekmot Ali high school, 1 participant is from Mirpur Bangla School, 1 participant is from Holy Cross College, 1 participant is from IST, 1 participant is from Home Economics college, 1 participant is from Dhaka Cantonment Girls Public School and College, 1 participant is from SUB, 1 participant is from Police Line School Jessore, 1 participant is from Dhaka Imperial college, 1 participant is from Feroza Bashir Ideal College & Institute, 1 participant is from NS govt. college, 1 participant is from NUC, 1 participant is from UODA. All of them are from Bengali medium background.

Chapter – 4

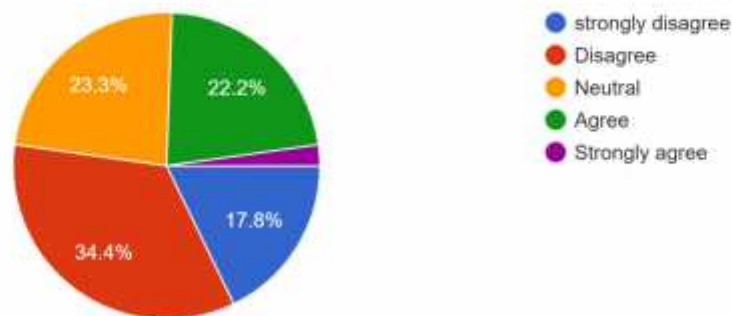
DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The collected data to conduct this research paper investigated and gathered information of individual participants' experience on what kind of challenges they've faced in English classroom when they were in class 8, how the textbook helped them, what they've learnt, what they couldn't learn, how they've been treated by the teacher in the classroom etc. to see if there's enough speaking activities given in 'English for Today' textbook for Bengali medium class 8 students to fulfill their need to learn to speak English.

Quantitative data analysis:

Quantitative data has been collected to support transcribed qualitative data and researcher selected 11 important questions among the 15 survey questions to get more precise outcome.

1. In class 8, the speaking activities provided in the text book named "English for Today" did fulfill our need and expectations.
90 responses

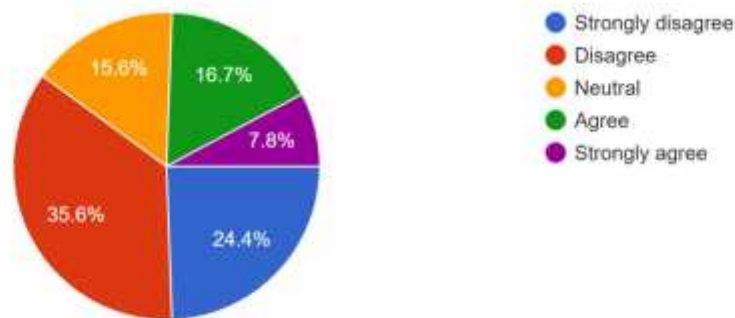


In the very first question, researcher tried to find out to what extent the speaking activities in 'English for Today' meet the need of the learners and for that she took the judgment from the experienced learners to see if they can figure out that. This question is based on one of the research question. And as shown in the chart, among all five likeart scale, majority of the participants disagreed to the question that the book 'English for Today' (for class 8) did fulfill their need and expectations on developing their speaking skill. Only 22.2% people agreed that

the textbook fulfill their need and expectations. 23.3% people gave neutral answer to that question. The result of this question makes a clear view on the speaking activities given in the textbook.

2. In the classroom, speaking activities were given equal importance like the other language macro skills.

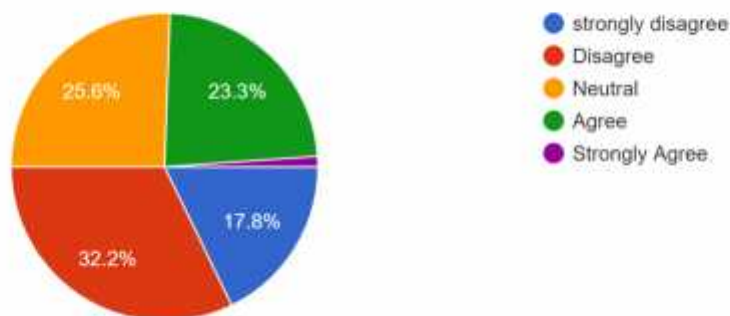
90 responses



Through the second question the pie chart shows that 35.6% people disagreed and 24.4% people strongly disagreed to the statement that speaking activities were given equal importance like other language macro skills. Here majority of the participants accepts that speaking skill were not given importance in the classroom learning. Only 16.7% people agreed and 7.8% people strongly agreed to that statement. It reveals that most of the teachers of Bengali medium schools do not give importance to the speaking skill like other language skills.

4. In the English class, teaching method used for speaking skill were interesting and engaging.

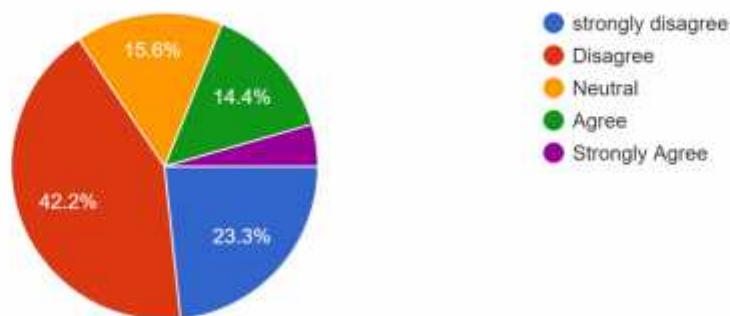
90 responses



This question was asked to see if the teaching methods teachers use in the classroom learning if that are appropriate and could grab the attention of the learner or not which is very important for second language learning process. But 32.2% people disagreed and 17.8% people strongly disagreed which means majority of the participant disagreed to the statement that the teaching method teachers uses to teach speaking in the classroom is not interesting or engaging to make them learn to speak English. However, 23.3% participants agreed that teaching methods were interesting in English classroom.

5. In the classroom, students got enough exposure to speak in English.

90 responses

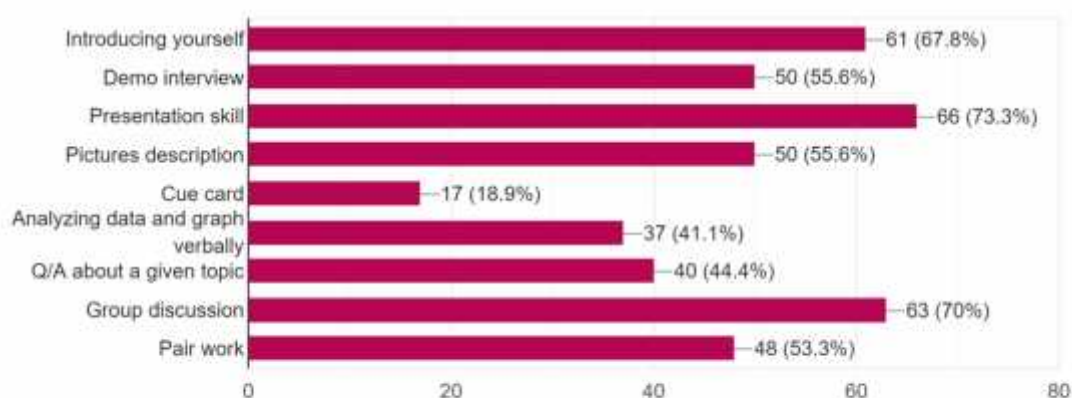


This question plays an important role while learning second language as students are learning language or anything they need exposure to that. But here 42.2% people disagreed and 23.3%

people strongly disagreed to this statement that they got enough exposure to speak English in the classroom. Which means majority of the people did not get enough exposure to learn to speak English which is a great cause for not developing learners' English speaking skill or to make them confident to speak in English. In Bengali medium schools, this is a great lacking in classroom learning which causes for not making the learners proficient English speaker. Only 14.4% people agreed to the statement that they got enough exposure to speak in English in the classroom. However, 15.6% people gave a neutral answer to that. As NCTB claims that English for Today textbook is more learner-centered, but from this response it proves that the English classroom is more teacher-centered.

6. Tick the type of speaking activity that should be included in the textbook. You can select multiple.

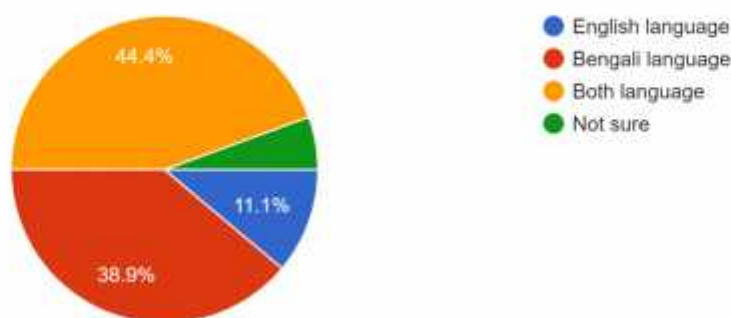
90 responses



Researcher asked a suggestion based checkbox questions to integrate authentic speaking activity for English for Today so that these experienced participants can choose multiple speaking activities which they find important to improve English speaking. Among 9 given options, 73.3% participant selected 'presentation skill' which is the most recommended speaking activity which they think should be included in the textbook 'English For Today' (for class 8). 70% people selected 'group discussion' and 67.8% people selected 'introducing yourself' which they think should be included in the textbook as speaking activity which are the top most recommended speaking activities they want them to be included. As many of the participants are graduate and

post graduate students so they could relate to this and were able to identify important activities they've missed learning in their past. However, 55.6% people selected 'demo interview' and 'pictures description', 53.3% people selected 'pair work' that should be included in the textbook as speaking activity which are the average recommendation from the participants. 44.4% recommendation for 'question/answer about a given topic' and 41.1% people selected 'analyzing data and graph verbally' which they think important and should be included in the textbook as speaking activity. Only 18.9% people recommended for 'cue card' which they think should be included as a speaking activity in the textbook which is the least recommendation.

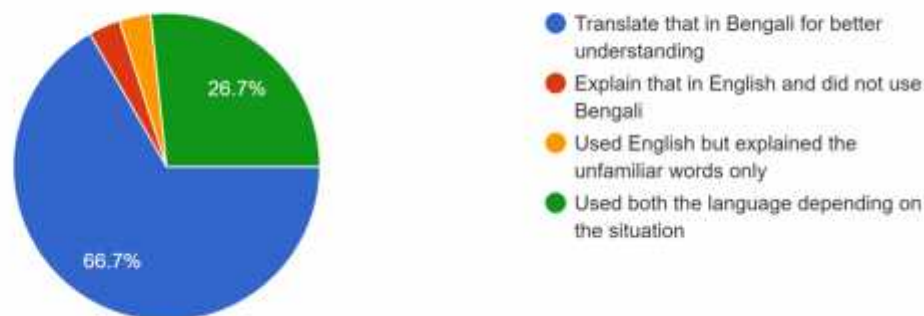
7. In the English classroom, teacher-student interaction were mainly in -
90 responses



This question is one of the important one to know that in English classroom, which language teachers prefer to interact with the learners which is a very important part of language learning. 44.4% people selected that in Bengali medium classroom, teacher-student interaction happens in both Bengali and English language which is the majority of answers. 38.9% people selected that interaction happened only in Bengali language in the English classroom which is a great lacking while learning a language and doesn't get access to that language. However, only 11.1% people selected that the interaction happened only in English language in the classroom and very few people selected 'not sure' as an answer to that statement.

8. The teaching activities provided in the book, teachers used to -

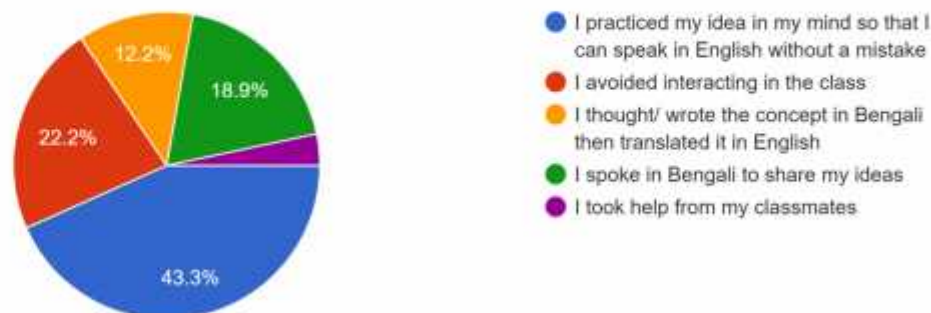
90 responses



Here through this question, researcher wanted to know the language teaching process and the responses came out is pretty obvious but unacceptable for language learning. According to their experience, 66.7% people agreed that teacher used to ‘translate the book activities in Bengali language for better understanding’ which will not make the learner attentive and sincere about second language learning or developing speaking skill. 26.7% people agreed that teachers ‘used both Bengali and English language depending on the situation’ in the classroom. However, very few people agreed to the statement that ‘teachers used to explain textbook activities in English and did not use Bengali in English classroom’. This is an evidence that CLT is not properly used in the English classroom.

10. During the interactive sessions in the classroom -

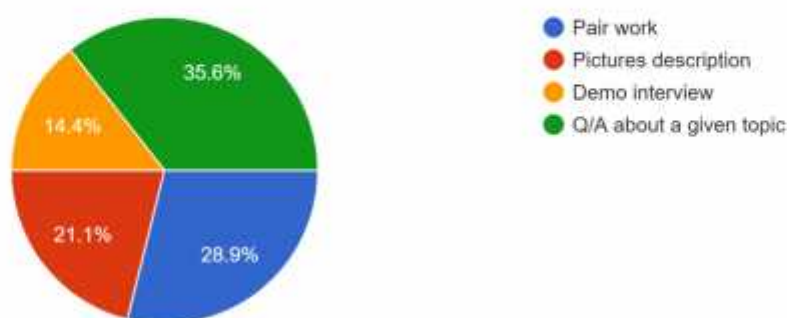
90 responses



Researcher wanted to measure their capability, performance and learning progress at that level which could be figure out through their responses on how they've dealt with the challenges they've faced in interactive sessions in English classroom. So the majority of the people as in 43.3% responses were 'I practiced my idea in my mind so that I can speak in English without a mistake' which shows their lack of confidence to speak English. 22.2% people responded that they avoided interacting in the class' which proves their fear of speaking English. 12.2% participants responded that they used to think the concept in Bengali then translate that in English which restricts their thinking capability in English. 18.9% responses were 'I spoke in Bengali to share my ideas' which shows their inability of speaking English and this also represents English language as a barrier for them to share their idea. Hence, this entire segment proves the lacking in teaching method of Bengali medium school teachers and insufficient textbook activities for speaking improvement in English classroom.

13. From the textbook which activity do you think helped you most to improve your English speaking?

90 responses

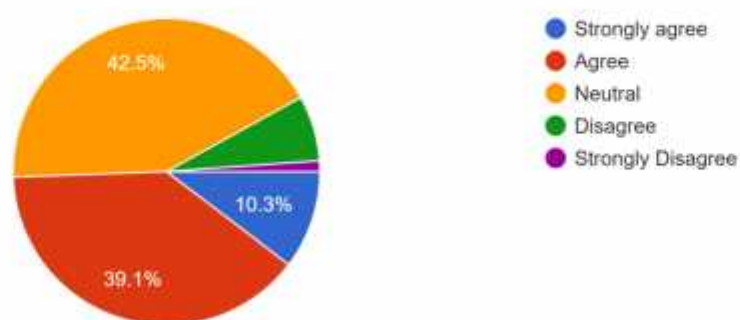


Here researcher wanted to reveal that existing speaking activities from the textbook 'English for Today' (for class 8), which activities helped the learners most to make improvement in English speaking. For that she gave four speaking activity from the textbook to see which are the most responded and helpful speaking activities. Surprisingly, 'question/answer about a given topic' speaking activity from the textbook got 35.6% response which is the highest one. 28.9%

responded 'pair work' were a helpful activity for them to improve their English speaking. 21.1% people responded 'pictures description' as a good speaking activity in the textbook although this activity is frequently given in every chapter in the book 'English for Today' (for class 8). 'Demo interview' got least response (14.4%) which means in the textbook, this activity is not given in proper format.

14. Picture description is one of the speaking activities in "English For Today" (for class 8) book. Do you think this activity helped you to learn how to describe something?

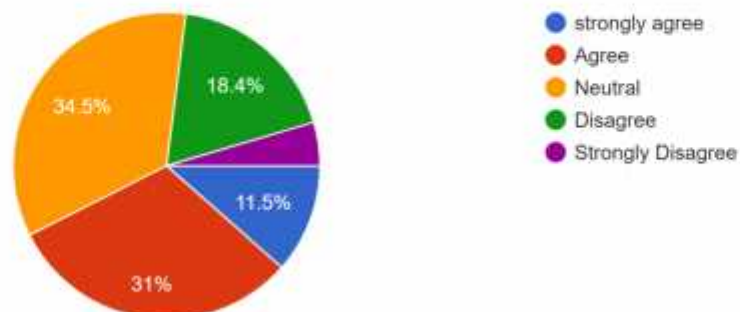
87 responses



Through this question, researcher wanted to judge the most frequent speaking activity from the textbook 'English For Today' (for class 8) whether this is helping the learners to make improvement in their English speaking or not. Majority of the participants gave neutral response that 'picture description' to some extent helped them to learn how to describe something. However, 39.1% participants agreed that this activity was helpful for them. This question got a positive response from the participants which needs to remain same with some possible update in the textbook.

15. Question/Answer about a given topic is one of the speaking activities in "English For Today" (for class 8) book. Did this activity help you in day to day conversations?

87 responses



This is another question to make judgment on the given speaking activity from the textbook to see if this has help them to make improvement in their speaking. 34.5% gave a neutral response that ‘Q/A about a given topic’ activity quite helped them in day to day conversations. 31% people agreed and 11.5% people strongly agreed that the speaking activity ‘question/answer about a given topic’ from the English for Today textbook helped them in their day to day conversation which is a positive point for the book. Although 18.4% people disagreed to that yet that’s the minority of the response.

Qualitative data analysis

In this segment, 6 selected interviewees were asked 4 open ended semi structured questions under four different theme to get a broader point of view of what is missing from the textbook ‘English For Today’ for class 8 as they have the experience to identify their need and can justify about the reality of the book and expectations from the book. For a better understanding and to share what participants actually feel about the asked questions, researcher explained them each questions and why is it necessary to answer and took their interview in Bengali language so that language doesn’t become a barrier as they are uncomfortable to speak in English. Researcher wanted a clarification from the experienced learners and witness them for the research paper about speaking activities given in English for Today textbook for class 8. Interviewees were asked following four different theme based questions –

Learning Experience: When you were in class 8, in the textbook ‘English For Today’ (for class 8), was there any speaking proficiency development activities? Was that helpful enough to improve your English speaking?

Through this question, interviewees were asked to share their learning experience from the textbook ‘English for today’ and 4 among 6 participant said there’s no speaking activities in the textbook ‘English for Today’ which can develop speaking proficiency. Most of them answered that they used to skip reading the textbook ‘English for Today’ as it doesn’t contain any interesting topic and every chapter has similar types of activities and they used to only read English grammar book and other English textbooks. Two of the interviewees said there was only one speaking related activity which was dialogue although teachers used to make them read that activity. 5 participants shared similar opinion as they experienced where teachers used to give importance only in on reading and writing, not speaking and listening so there was no possible way to develop our English proficiency from English For Today textbook activities. Two of the interviewees said there was only reading activities which also was very rare. One of them shared that the book ‘English for Today’ was just a must have book as a show off but students mostly used to read other English books. Three of them have responded that their teachers used to suggest them other English textbooks to develop their vocabulary and sentence constructions. One of the participant shared that there was very limited numbers of structured questions which already has the answer in the book so students memorizes the answer and did not share their own thought in the classroom. So ultimately every participant shared that the book ‘English for Today’ did not have any speaking activity which would help them learn to speak English. This is an evidence that interviewees’ need were not properly fulfilled by reading ‘English for Today’.

Inadequacy of teaching method: Do you think there was some sort of lacking while teachers execute speaking activities in the classroom? Please share your opinion.

The participants were asked about the teaching style in Bengali medium English classroom while teachers taught them speaking activities. 5 among 6 of the interviewees said in Bengali medium schools, teachers used to speak in Bengali in English classroom which was the great lacking while teachers taught. Two of them have responded that teachers had problems in their English pronunciation so many things were unclear to the students and they also learnt those wrong pronunciations. One of them shared that if teachers could make activities vaster and open with

more situation based conversations from how it was to how it should be so that students could connect that more and could improvise their English speaking. Another participant shared if teachers would've talk in English, they could motivate their students and students would be prepared mentally to give answers in English. Whenever students misinterprets something or ask question, teachers explains that in Bengali which never helped them to develop their vocabulary or speaking. Three of the interviewees said speaking needs to be practiced and teachers never gave them the opportunity to do that and did not give importance to English speaking. Another interviewee said Bengali medium schools have only one 'English' subject so they must speak in English in that class. One of the participants shared that for many of the students English was a scary subject. Teachers used to make them read which was the only vocal activity which they thought will help them learn to speak English and students were afraid of speaking English. Two of the interviewees said that both teaching pattern and book activities were wrong for speaking proficiency development. Another participant responded that teachers used to prioritize and communicate with only few brilliant students and other students used to be quiet in the English classroom and teachers didn't communicate with the students that much. The last participant shared that the main lacking of 'English for Today' textbook and teaching style is they are focused on 'exam' so when teachers make critical questions which already has the answer in the lesson so students memorize those things to pass the exam and get good marks and do not focus on learning or language learning. She also said, in Bengali medium schools, classroom learning is rule governed and there's no independent learning or communication of the students so they cannot open up and share their ideas on specific topic which is the main lacking in the teaching style. This is also the reason why student cannot give spontaneous answer, they say whatever they memorize. It is clear that CLT wasn't properly used in the textbook or in teaching method in English classroom and teachers are still influenced by GTM. Moreover, there's a blending of both CLT and GTM in the textbook and teaching method.

Challenges: While taking a part in any interactive session in the English classroom, what kind of challenges have you faced? How did you deal with them?

Through this question, interviewees were asked to share the challenges they've faced in interactive sessions in the English classroom when they were in class 8. According to their responses, all of them experienced similar challenges as they had fear of making mistake and

being judge by other classmates as they used to make fun if anyone speaks incorrect English though one of them said teachers used to correct them while making mistakes. Although two of the participant claimed that they had very few interactive session which was not separately done. Other two interviewees said they had lack of vocabulary which became barrier for them so there was no chance to speak fluently and they used to suffer while speaking English or used similar and easy sentences repeatedly to response. Two of them have responded that they used to avoid interacting in the classroom as other classmates used to stare at them while they talked and mock them for making mistake. Another participant didn't get any interactive classroom when she was in class 8 but if teachers demanded for English communication for any queries students used to discuss in Bengali then translated those in English then say that to teachers but most of the time they communicated in Bengali. One of them tried to be confident while speaking English and tried learn and complete every task in the classroom whether she's right or wrong. Another participant shared there was very few interactive session or group work activities in the English class where she used to speak Bengali. There was a huge communication gap according to the participants' response which also was a part of the challenges they've faced in English classroom.

Recommendation: Would you like to suggest something to upgrade speaking activities in the textbook 'English For Today' (for class 8)? Any type of activity that you feel might help you in real life communication?

Through this question, researcher wanted some recommendation to integrate authentic speaking activities for 'English for Today' textbook from the interviewees as they can identify what is missing from the book from their past experience. Surprisingly all of the interviewee suggested 'different situation based conversation taken from regular life' for English speaking improvement and teachers should execute them in classroom so that students get to know the concept and easily communicate which interviewees believe would help students in their real life communication. Half of the interviewees recommended that 'instruction' is very important for learning speaking as students cannot figure out importance of given activity so they lose their interest from learning. They also think class 8 students are grown enough to learn advance level communicational strategies as the book has few dialogues which is helpful for general conversation and that is helpful for primary level students. Some guideline on what to say in this

situation and activities that can teach students how to say something in different ways which will help them to develop their vocabulary or speaking by using different synonyms of a word. One of them recommended there should be some conversations with university teacher or how to talk to a foreigner as mostly people are afraid to communicate with foreigners. Three of the participant recommended textbook should contain some activities like workshop, group study sessions to make the learning process interesting for them and teachers must apply them in class and they should plan and organize activities within given time in every session throughout the year. Another participant shared there's no variation in the textbook activities as every chapter in the book has same activities teaching in same manner. One of them suggested that 'English for Today' book should contain activities such as speaking session where students will only speak in English, no reading or writing. Four out of six participants said speaking needs to be practiced so there should be a practice session in the textbook for speaking English. Two interviewees recommended textbook 'English For Today' should have a lesson on dialogues based on their favorite topic, different real life scenario or on most controversial topics for oral test or in class practice in group or pair which will match with their daily life communication and the book should improvise their lesson planning.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

This study has explored effectiveness of the speaking activities given in the textbook ‘English For Today’ for class 8 Bengali medium students and gathered information from the experienced students who can identify their needs and the findings of the study showed quite similar responses from the participants although their age group and passing years are different. Some of the salient findings are given below –

1. Through the total data analysis process, researcher found that ‘English for Today’ book has inadequate number of speaking activity with less variation and no instruction on how to apply those activities in different way. So teachers either skip those activities or make the learners read. Students are less interested in reading ‘English for Today’ textbook. The textbook has more reading and writing activities.
2. Class 8 students are pre-intermediate and intermediate level of learners as school students so they think that speaking activities given in textbook ‘English for Today’ are too simple for them. From the collected data it’s clear that the textbook didn’t properly fulfill the need of the learners.
3. Speaking skill doesn’t get prioritized because of the lack of book activities, inappropriate teaching method and textbook planning. So teachers are more focused on reading and writing skill. Students cannot speak spontaneously, they need to think and practice before sharing that idea verbally. There’s a communication gap in the English classroom which is also a challenge while executing speaking activities.
4. To integrate authentic speaking activity in the textbook, researcher took recommendation from the participants through interview and survey. According to the participants ‘Self introduction’, ‘presentation skill’ and ‘group discussion’ are top three voted English speaking activities which they think should be included in the textbook ‘English for Today’.
5. ‘Picture description’ and ‘question answer on a given topic’ are two speaking activities added in recent years in ‘English for Today’ textbook which students found helpful for them to speak better.

6. Students are more interested in practical activities like group work, speaking sessions, dialogue practice in pair, daily life conversation, opinion based topics, giving presentation, self introduction, controversial topics, Q/A on topic of their interest etc. which they think will help them in English speaking skill and these activities are not given in 'English for today' textbook. Majority of the participants thinks speaking needs to be practiced but there are very less exposure for them in the classroom to speak English.
7. From the referendum of majority of the participants in both qualitative and quantitative data it was very clear that in Bengali medium school English classroom, teacher-student interaction mainly happens in Bengali language. Teachers are more comfortable to use their native language and students have lack of vocabulary, fear of making mistake and being judge by others while speaking so they prefer Bengali language to share their opinion. Teachers translate and explain activities in Bengali language.
8. Reading is considered as a vocal activity that teachers make students practice in the classroom which is also in a limited period.
9. It's been observed that while taking part in the qualitative interview, participants were uncomfortable to talk in English so the researcher has to conduct the interview in Bengali. This is a noticeable fact that all interviewees are from Bengali medium and still feel uncomfortable to speak English. Which proves their language learning at the primary and secondary level were very weak and inappropriate.
10. There's a blending of both CLT and GTM in English for Today and both methods are not properly used neither being dominant. Although NCTB designed 'English for Today' following CLT approach but English teachers from Bengali medium classroom influenced by GTM and traditional teaching style and being less communicative in the classroom. Although the textbook proposes learner-centered classroom but through the data it proves that the classroom are more teacher-centered and less learner-centered.

Chapter – 5.1

LIMITATION

Some of the limitations of this research paper are –

- Researcher didn't survey on class 8 students which would help the paper to get more valid evidence from the textbook and the outcome of the study would be more reliable.
- Another reason for not trying to reach out to class 8 students to take participation because the researcher thinks that they cannot identify their need and they don't have enough knowledge and experience about what they want.
- The main limitation of this research paper is that this paper is based on the small sample size, not a big group of participants as researcher has limited contact to reach out.
- Collecting qualitative data was challenging because of the lack of interest.
- Some junior participants who are still in school/ college couldn't identify what is important activities which should have in the book from the multiple choice checkbox question so they voted for less important ones.

CONCLUSION

There are countless researches on English speaking activities in the textbooks from nonnative schools all over the world. The effectiveness of those speaking activities should get the centre of attention along with other language macro skill teaching. Learning English as a second language is not a cup of tea which should get more priorities and exposure. However, this study explores on the integration of speaking activities in EAP course book ‘English for Today’ for class 8. Through this study, the researcher aimed to investigate the effectiveness of the speaking activities given in the textbook ‘English for Today’ published by NCTB for class 8 Bengali medium school and also wanted to explore whether the reality of the textbook meet the learners’ expectations from the textbook. Besides, this research paper has also investigated the challenges learners faced in English classroom, inadequacy of teaching method and their learning experience when they were in class 8. From the responses of the experienced learners the outcome of this study shows that the textbook ‘English For Today’ is inappropriate with its lesson planning, instruction and shortage of speaking activities in terms of learning ‘English Speaking’. According to Rahman (2018), all the ‘English for Today’ books are designed to fulfill learners’ need but the collected data from the experienced learners witness the fact that the textbook (for class 8) didn’t fulfill learners’ need and expectations neither it helped them in their speaking proficiency development. However, those few speaking activities given in the textbook ‘English for Today’ to some extent did help minority of the participants in their general conversation. Rahman (2018) discovered through his research that according to NCTB curriculum, the aim of the English language syllabus is to focus on all four language macro skills – reading, writing, speaking and listening and promotes real life communication. He also claims that the teachers emphasizes on writing and reading and ignores listening and speaking skills which are most important part of language learning. But through the collected data it shows that the goals and objectives of the textbook ‘English for Today’ failed to accomplish its target and learners’ need. Thus, the quality and quantity of speaking contents in the textbook ‘English for Today’ for class 8 needs to be updated according to the learners’ need and expectation.

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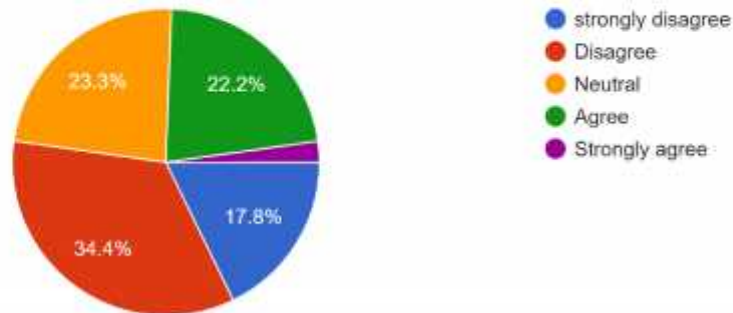
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<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/340926124> PROBLEMS IN TEACHING ENGLISH
SPEAKING SKILL IN LARGE CLASSES OF RURAL COLLEGES IN BANGLADES
H A CASE STUDY

Appendix

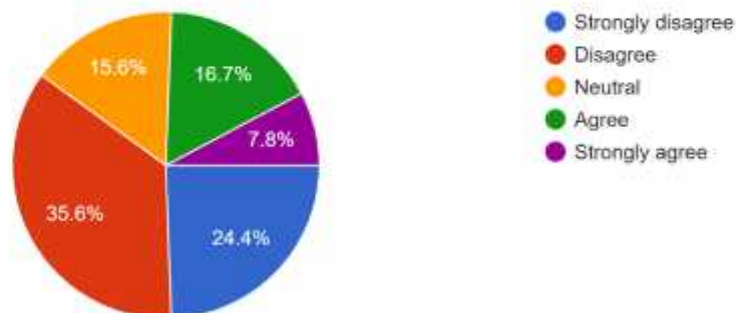
1. In class 8, the speaking activities provided in the text book named "English for Today" did fulfill our need and expectations.

90 responses



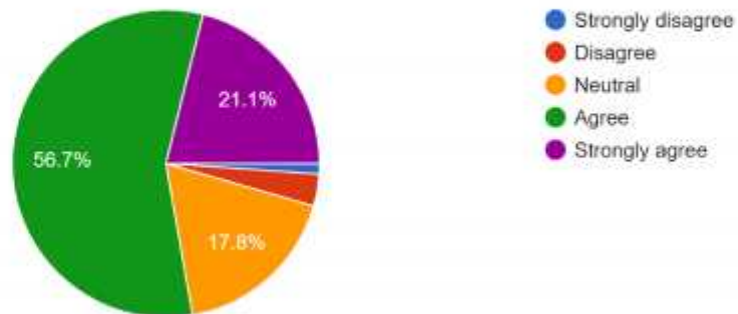
2. In the classroom, speaking activities were given equal importance like the other language macro skills.

90 responses



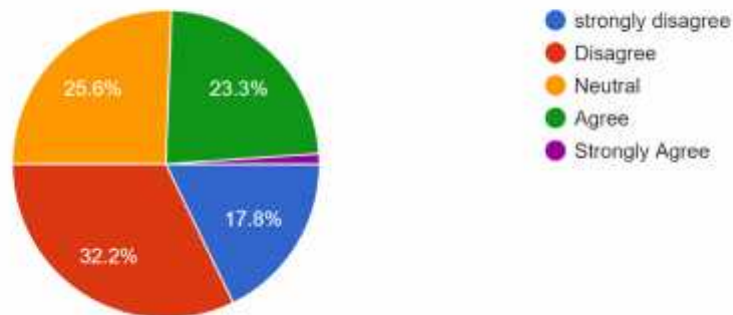
3. In "English for Today" (for class 8) textbook language were easily understandable.

90 responses



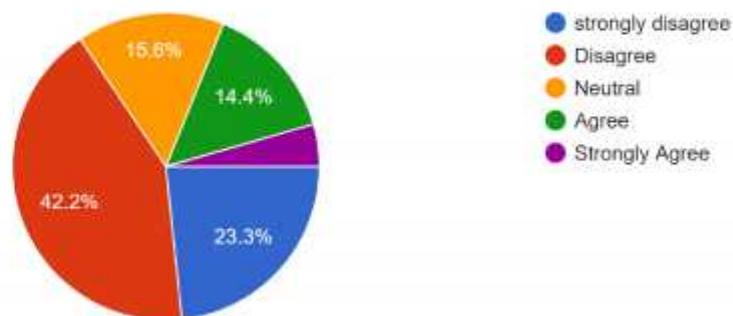
4. In the English class, teaching method used for speaking skill were interesting and engaging.

90 responses



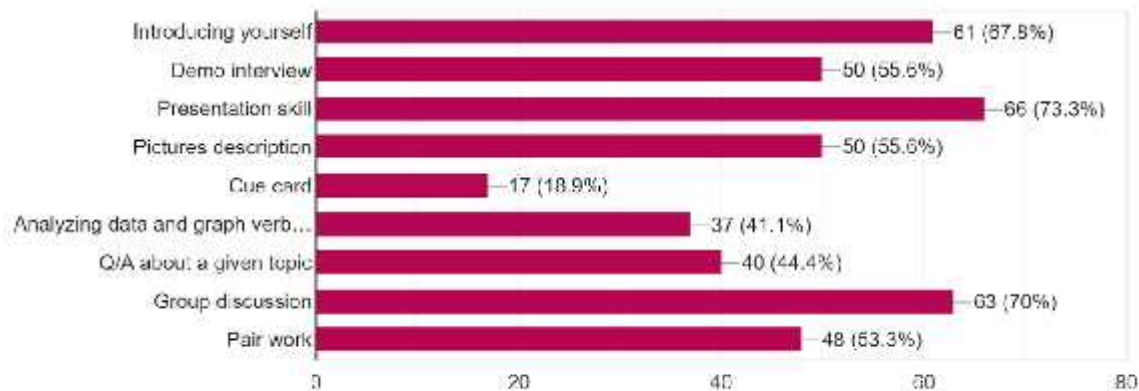
5. In the classroom, students got enough exposure to speak in English.

90 responses



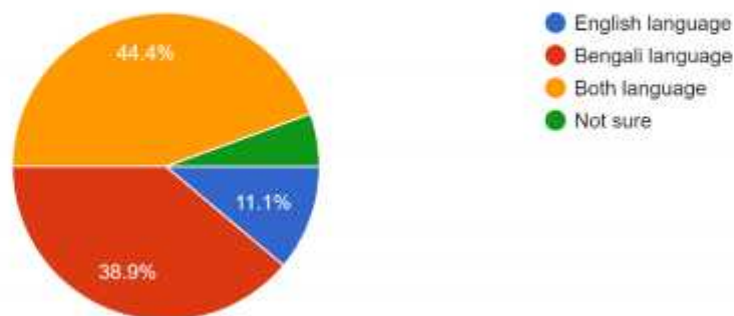
6. Tick the type of speaking activity that should be included in the textbook. You can select multiple.

90 responses



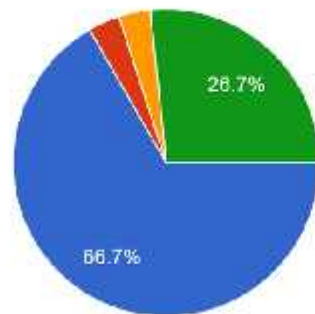
7. In the English classroom, teacher-student interaction were mainly in -

90 responses



8. The learning activities provided in the book, teachers used to -

90 responses



- Translate that in Bengali for better understanding
- Explain that in English and did not use Bengali
- Used English but explained the unfamiliar words only
- Used both the language depending on the situation

9. When I was in class 8 -

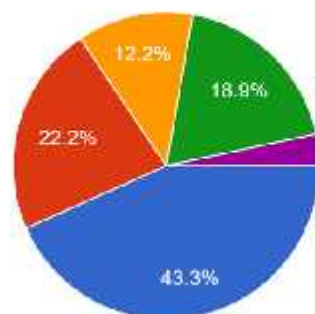
90 responses



- I gave enough importance to English speaking skill
- I wasn't aware of the fact that speaking English is necessary
- I knew the importance of English speaking skill but ignored that
- I was focused on passing the subject
- I knew it but ignored that

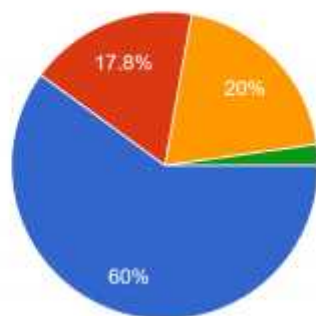
10. During the interactive sessions in the classroom -

90 responses



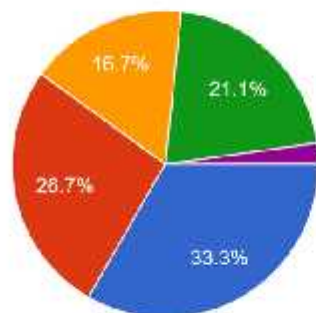
- I practiced my idea in my mind so that I can speak in English without a mistake
- I avoided interacting in the class
- I thought/ wrote the concept in Bengali then translated it in English
- I spoke in Bengali to share my ideas
- I took help from my classmates

11. In English class, most of the participants were -
90 responses



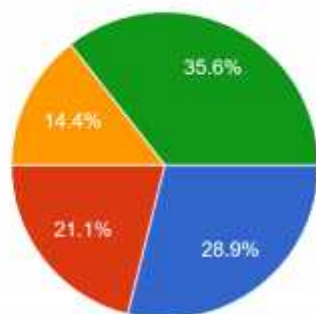
- Focused on getting a good grade
- Very inactive
- Active and interested learner
- Talented and proficient English speaker

12. In the text book -
90 responses



- The speaking activities were based on real life situation
- The speaking activities weren't based on real life situation
- The speaking activities were unnecessary and irrelevant
- The speaking activities were reasonably good
- The speaking activities were impractical

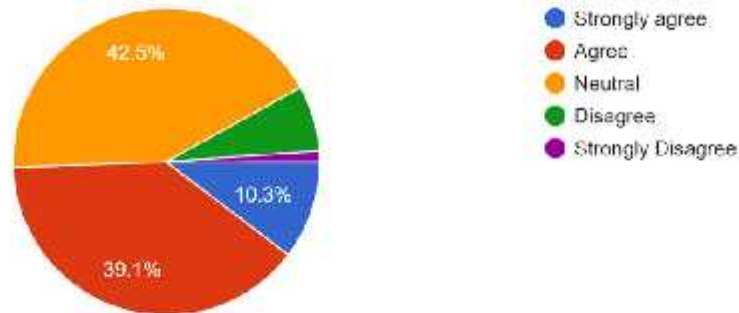
13. From the textbook which activity do you think helped you most to improve your English speaking?
90 responses



- Pair work
- Pictures description
- Demo interview
- Q/A about a given topic

14. Picture description is one of the speaking activities in "English For Today" (for class 8) book. Do you think this activity helped you to learn how to describe something?

87 responses



15. Question/Answer about a given topic is one of the speaking activities in "English For Today" (for class 8) book. Did this activity help you in day to day conversations?

87 responses

