

An Analysis of English Textbook for Fourth Grade Students of Bangladesh

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Abstract

This study critically examines the fourth-grade English textbook, English for Today, used in mainstream classrooms in Bangladesh. Despite 12 years of English instruction, many students in Bangladesh struggle with language proficiency, suggesting a gap between curriculum objectives and practical outcomes. The research investigates this gap by evaluating the textbook across four analytical stages. Initially, the study assesses the textbook's aims, exercises, assessments, and learning process, identifying its intent to build language skills through engaging activities. The second step analyzes the textbook using various educational theories, such as social constructivism, Bloom's taxonomy, the VARK model, and principles of pedagogy and educational psychology. These frameworks highlight the textbook's attempt to foster active learning, critical thinking, and inclusivity. The third phase involves a critical evaluation of the textbook's physical aspects, content quality, use of illustrations, and language structure. The research concludes with a content analysis, noting both strengths and weaknesses. The findings reveal that English for Today incorporates effective learning methods, such as hands-on activities and command-based instructions, aimed at enhancing student engagement. It demonstrates a strong alignment with educational theories, achieving a high readability score of 98.27. However, significant shortcomings are identified in the physical production of the textbook. Issues such as an unattractive cover, poor printing, and low-quality paper detract from the overall educational experience. Reflectively, the study underscores the importance of not just theoretical and content-based alignment in textbooks but also the material and visual aspects that affect students' motivation and engagement. While the textbook's pedagogical framework is sound, the findings suggest that improving its physical presentation could make it a more effective tool for language learning.

Keywords: *English; National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB); Textbook Analysis*

INTRODUCTION

Learning, knowledge, and education are interrelated concepts that foster change and improve performance. Education is a systematic process conducted in formal settings, with three primary objectives: individual welfare, social welfare, and mobility. It contributes to personal well-being, coherent knowledge, societal development, and cultural preservation. Education also influences the behavior of educators by facilitating the exchange of experiences, emotions, and behaviors. The curriculum is designed to guide the growth of learners, and textbooks play an essential role in self-directed learning by providing structured guidance, particularly at the secondary level. To be effective, these textbooks must be well-designed and implemented by professionally trained teachers.

In English Language Teaching (ELT), textbooks are vital for language acquisition and national development. Evaluating the quality of these materials is essential (McGrath, 2002). According to Hutchinson and Torres (1994), textbooks are indispensable in ELT classrooms, facilitating instruction and acquisition. Textbooks can either motivate or discourage learners based on their content (Zohrabi, Sabouri & Kheradmand, 2014). For textbooks to be effective, they must meet specific standards (Khatib et al., 2013). Ahour and Ahmadi (2012) emphasize that reading materials are the primary means for transmitting information systematically to learners. Evaluating textbooks enables teachers to select suitable resources and tailor them to meet learners' needs, reflecting both strengths and weaknesses, and guiding teachers, administrators, and material developers in choosing appropriate materials.

In Bangladesh, English is a compulsory subject from primary to higher education. As the demand for English proficiency increases in a globalized world, effective ELT courses are crucial for national progress. Evaluating textbooks, especially at the elementary level, is essential because they shape assessment systems for students. Without effective materials, teaching and learning English in formal settings is challenging.

The significance of this study lies in evaluating the English for Today textbooks used from grades one through twelve in Bangladesh, identifying their strengths and weaknesses, and offering suggestions for improvement (Begum & Farooqui, 2008). Despite its communicative approach aimed at language proficiency (Billah et al., 2015), many students struggle with English even after 12 years of study. The textbook contains mostly written exercises, with limited interactive group work, leading to monotonous and outdated learning experiences. Although the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) claimed that the 2018 edition was designed to meet students' needs, their interests were not fully considered (Ali & Walker, 2014).

The current study specifically examines the English for Today textbook for fourth-grade, as no previous research has focused on this level. The textbook, being the only language resource for teaching English as a second language in Bangladesh, must be carefully evaluated to ensure it aligns with curriculum goals and student needs. The findings highlight areas for improvement, aiming to make the content more engaging and effective for learners.

METHOD

This study employed a combination of content analysis and descriptive qualitative research. Content analysis involves the systematic classification, tabulation, and interpretation of data (Anderson, 2007), where materials are examined, read, and analyzed to uncover deeper meanings (Krippendorff, 2004). The purpose of the research was to assess whether the English for Today textbook effectively supports English language teaching at the fourth-grade level in Bangladesh.

The primary material for this study was the English for Today textbook, which is used in Grade 4 classrooms and recommended by the Bangladeshi government in alignment with the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) guidelines. The textbook's content, linguistic features, and visual elements were analyzed across three key areas:

1. Readability – The ease with which the text can be read and understood by fourth-grade students.
2. Legibility – The clarity of the printed text and how it supports student learning.

3. Physical Quality – The overall hand feel, including the textbook's paper quality, printing, and design aspects.

By examining these aspects, the study aimed to evaluate the textbook's alignment with curriculum goals and its effectiveness in promoting language acquisition.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1.1 About the Textbook

The English for Today textbook, designed for fourth-grade students in Bangladesh, is part of the compulsory curriculum provided by the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education. Developed to enhance students' proficiency in the four core language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—this textbook incorporates meaningful and engaging exercises. Emphasis is placed on listening and speaking skills as the foundation for improving reading and writing abilities. The topics and themes within the textbook aim to equip students with practical communication skills for real-life situations, while also fostering human values and expanding their intellectual horizons.

The English for Today textbook, published and designed by the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) and printed by Times Media Ltd., follows the new English syllabus introduced as part of the National Education Policy of 2010. It has been prescribed by NCTB as the official textbook for class four students since the 2013 academic year. The textbook is distributed free of charge under the Primary Education Development Program (PEDP-4), an initiative of the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education under the Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh.

The textbook contains 42 units and is structured to present grammar points and exercises in a systematic and graded manner to build competency in all language skills. The government, led by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, has made efforts since 2009 to enhance the appeal and accessibility of textbooks by distributing them in four colors for free. The English for Today textbook is recommended as an effective tool for improving language skills in an engaging and relevant manner. A detailed illustration of the textbook is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Detailed Description of the Textbook

NAME OF THE TEXTBOOK	ENGLISH FOR TODAY
WRITERS	SHAHEEN M. KABIR A. M. M. HAMIDUR RAHMAN MD. ZUL FEQAR HAIDER GOUTAM ROY
ILLUSTRATION EDITOR	HASHEM KHAN
FIRST EDITION	OCTOBER, 2012
REVISED EDITION	JUNE, 2015
REPRINT	OCTOBER, 2022
PUBLISHER	NATIONAL CURRICULUM AND TEXTBOOK BOARD, BANGLADESH
PRINTER	TIMES MEDIA LTD.
PRINTED ON	80 GSM PAPER (AS PER TENDER NOTICE)
PREPARED BY	NCTB (NATIONAL CURRICULUM AND TEXTBOOK BOARD, BANGLADESH)

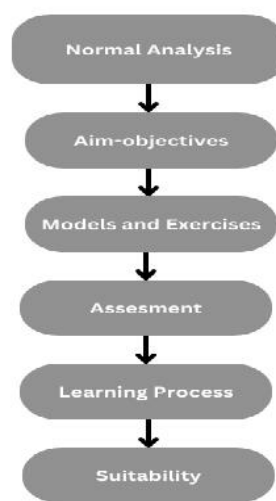
1.2 Analysis of the Textbook

The analysis of the fourth-grade English for Today textbook follows a structured, multi-step approach. First, a general evaluation is conducted, examining the goals, objectives, learning processes, and overall appropriateness of the material. The second step involves analyzing the textbook through various theoretical frameworks and educational concepts. Finally, a critical analysis is performed to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the textbook in detail.

1.2.1 Normal Analysis

In the general analysis phase, the aim-objectives, models and exercises, assessment, learning process, and suitability analysis of the text book are done. Figure 2 illustrates the normal analysis process.

Figure 2. Normal Analysis



*Aim-objectives:*The fourth-grade English for Today textbook aims to help students achieve proficiency in the four essential language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—through engaging and meaningful activities. The curriculum, aligned with primary education objectives, outlines terminal competencies, attainable class-specific competencies, and learning outcomes. It also provides guidance for teachers, textbook authors, and trainers on implementing these activities effectively.

The primary goal of the textbook is for students to understand basic instructions, commands, and everyday English, enabling effective communication. Units 1–9 cover various topics, such as "About Me" and "Traffic Lights and Rules," which include relevant exercises to help students achieve these objectives. The textbook also aims for students to distinguish between English words, follow simple commands, and use everyday language. They will learn basic greetings, recite poetry, and participate in conversations, developing their understanding of punctuation, paragraph composition, and letter-writing skills.

Students are also guided in composing simple personal letters and interacting socially, enhancing their ability to write about themselves, friends, and familiar topics. They will practice forming sentences, recognizing professions, understanding clocks and calendars, and reading punctuation. The textbook covers reading instructions and applying them, teaching pronunciation variations and the meanings of words to build

conversational skills. Students will also acquire the ability to communicate effectively with teachers, family, and others.

Models and Exercises: The textbook incorporates diverse activities such as pair work, group work, chain drills, and role play, providing students with practical language use experiences. Exercises include charts, fill-in-the-blank activities, true/false questions, and opportunities to write and speak short paragraphs, all of which help students structure their learning. Teachers play a crucial role in guiding students to understand these concepts.

Assessment: In the fourth-grade English curriculum, learning outcomes are assessed through a combination of formative and summative evaluations. Sixty percent of assessment is based on regular classroom activities, while the remaining 40% comes from collective evaluations. Various exercises are provided by the teacher and the textbook to measure progress, and summative assessments are carried out in multiple stages to ensure a comprehensive understanding of student learning.

Learning Process: The textbook offers exercises that students can complete independently, with teacher assistance, or in groups, making learning interactive and enjoyable. It emphasizes practical application through activities involving marking, listening, reading, writing, and speaking, often supported by visuals. For example, lessons on letter writing teach fundamental rules and motivate students to write letters to friends and relatives.

Suitability: The textbook effectively teaches students to talk and write about themselves, their families, and everyday subjects. It covers basic grammar and vocabulary, making learning practical and relevant. It also provides information about animals, birds, nutrition, and healthy eating habits, making everyday life more accessible. The inclusion of rhymes, stories, and simple grammar rules makes learning enjoyable. With relevant illustrations and simple language, the textbook is well-suited for fourth-grade students, ensuring they find studying both effective and engaging.

1.2.2 Analysis with Theories and Concepts

The analysis of the fourth-grade English for Today textbook incorporates several educational theories and models, including social constructivism, the VARK model, readability and legibility principles, educational psychology, and inclusive representation. These frameworks are used to evaluate the textbook's effectiveness in engaging students and promoting learning.

Analysis with Social Constructivism Theory: The analysis of the fourth-grade English for Today textbook aligns with Lev Vygotsky's social constructivism theory, which emphasizes that learning is influenced by social interaction and real-life contexts. According to this theory, knowledge is constructed through interaction with others and is shaped by the learner's environment and experiences. For materials to be effective, they should be practical, interactive, and collaborative, incorporating visuals and real-life scenarios.

In the fourth-grade textbook, there is a clear emphasis on combining practical and visual elements. For instance, Unit Eight, Traffic Lights, uses real-life scenarios to teach students about the significance of traffic signals, their meanings, and practical applications. This approach encourages interaction and cooperation through relevant exercises, allowing students to connect classroom learning with real-world experiences.

Social constructivism suggests that textbook content should be contextual and socially relevant, incorporating cultural and societal themes. For example, in Unit Forty, the textbook highlights Garment Workers' Day, which presents the socio-cultural role of garment workers. However, including both men and women in this context would further support students' understanding of real-life roles and promote inclusivity, aligning with the theory's focus on socio-cultural relevance.

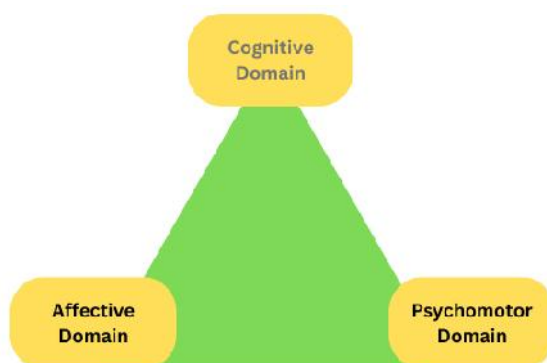
Scaffolding, an essential aspect of social constructivism, is evident in the textbook. The material provides step-by-step instructions and visual aids to help students build knowledge progressively. For example, Unit Five explores critical analysis by encouraging students to reflect on various themes, supporting the development of their analytical skills. Additionally, Unit Nine employs problem-based learning by focusing on traffic signals, helping students navigate real-life situations, enhance their analytical thinking, and actively engage with peers.

The textbook also promotes student-centered learning. On page nineteen, students have the option to practice cursive writing independently, allowing for self-assessment and personal growth. Various chapters in the book discuss the family structure and the roles and responsibilities of family members, helping students understand cultural influences and societal values. The chapter on SM Sultan provides historical context, giving students a deeper understanding of his significance in Bangladesh's history, further enriching their knowledge of cultural and historical connections.

Overall, the textbook supports dynamic learning through diverse perspectives, emerging cultural norms, and new insights, which aligns well with the principles of social constructivism theory. It encourages critical thinking and active engagement, demonstrating the integration of this theoretical framework in the curriculum.

Analysis with Bloom's Taxonomy: Bloom's Taxonomy, developed by Benjamin Samuel Bloom in 1956, is a hierarchical framework that categorizes educational learning objectives into three primary domains: cognitive, affective, and psychomotor. This framework aids educators in creating effective and meaningful learning experiences by providing a structured approach to formulating learning objectives and assessments. Figure 3 illustrates the various domains of Bloom's Taxonomy, highlighting its comprehensive approach to understanding and enhancing the learning process.

Figure 3. Domains of Bloom's Taxonomy



The cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains outlined in Bloom's Taxonomy are interconnected, encompassing mental abilities, emotions, and physical activities. The fourth-grade English textbook aligns with these domains, promoting students' abilities to remember, understand, apply, analyze, evaluate, and create concepts based on their own experiences. Figure 4 illustrates the pyramid structure of Bloom's Taxonomy.

Figure 4. Bloom's Taxonomy Pyramid



The first level of Bloom's Taxonomy is remembering, which the textbook addresses through various means, such as key terms, vocabulary, and questions. For example, Units 8 and 9 discuss traffic lights and rules, incorporating visuals and mnemonic aids that help students recall important facts and information applicable to real-life scenarios.

The second level is understanding. The textbook enhances comprehension of complex concepts by offering clear explanations, real-world examples, and images, particularly when illustrating family structure through a family tree in Unit Four.

The third stage, applying, is supported by practical simulations and problem-solving scenarios within the textbook. Students can implement their learning through exercises related to traffic rules and lights, which they can also apply in their everyday lives while navigating the streets.

Next is the analyzing stage. The textbook encourages exploration of diverse professions, prompting students to analyze various human occupations and improving their communication skills across different contexts.

The fifth level, evaluating, is facilitated by the textbook's presentation of various topics that encourage students to form their own opinions and evaluate different perspectives.

Finally, the creating level emerges as students synthesize their knowledge about traffic rules and lights. For instance, when students encounter broken traffic lights in real life, they develop new insights, such as recognizing the importance of following traffic police instructions when crossing the road.

Through the application of Bloom's Taxonomy, the fourth-grade English textbook significantly enhances the learning process, guiding students toward acquiring new knowledge and skills.

Analysis with the VARK model: The VARK model, initially introduced by Walter and refined by Neil Fleming in 1947, outlines how different learners perceive and assimilate information. According to this model, individuals can grasp a subject through various modalities: visual, auditory, kinesthetic, or read/write.

This model is effectively supported by the fourth-grade English textbooks, which cater to diverse learning styles. Visual learners benefit from pictures and diagrams that illustrate key concepts. Auditory learners can engage with the material through listening activities, while kinesthetic learners can grasp information through movement and hands-on activities.

By accommodating these different learning preferences, the fourth-grade English textbooks enhance the overall educational experience, ensuring that all students have the opportunity to understand and engage with the content in ways that resonate with their individual learning styles. Figure 5 illustrates the VARK model.

Figure 5. VARK Model



In Unit Seven of the Class IV English Textbook, the lesson effectively accommodates various learning styles as outlined by the VARK model. Visual learners can grasp the dialogue about making requests through the use of imagery, while auditory learners benefit from the teacher reading the lesson aloud in class. Those who excel in reading and writing can master the topic through practice, and kinesthetic learners engage actively through pair work, applying their understanding in real-life contexts. This arrangement ensures that the curriculum is inclusive and effective for all students.

Readability Analysis: Readability refers to the ease or difficulty of reading a text, influenced by factors such as sentence length, word choice, and syllable count. George Clare (1963) defines readability as the ease of understanding based on writing style (Rahman, 2019). The Class IV English Textbook employs a straightforward writing style, utilizing short phrases, simple sentences, and familiar vocabulary. Additionally, it includes action verbs, images, photographs, and graphs to enhance engagement.


To evaluate the text's readability, the Flesch Reading Ease formula is applied, which is detailed in Rudolf Flesch's book *The Art of Readable Writing*. This formula calculates readability based on word and sentence lengths, producing scores that categorize text difficulty: a score of 0–29 indicates very challenging text, 60–69 is ideal, 80–89 is easy, and 90–100 is very easy—suitable for fifth graders and below (Rahman, 2019). The formula is as follows:

Flesch Reading Ease Score = $206.835 - 1.014 \times (\text{Total Words} \div \text{Total Sentences}) - 84.6 \times (\text{Total Syllables} \div \text{Total Words})$. The text on "SM Sultan," found in Unit 34 on Page 68 of the Class IV English Textbook, has been evaluated for its readability level using an appropriate formula. A sample page is included in Figure 6.

Figure 6. The text on “SM Sultan” of Grade Four English Textbook

Unit 34 SM Sultan Lessons 1-2

A. Look. Read and say.



SM Sultan is a famous painter of our country. He was born in Narail in 1923. His family didn't have a lot of money. Sultan went to school for five years, but then he went to work with his father.

As a child, Sultan loved to draw. He drew pictures of buildings and other things. He wanted to study at Kolkata Art College, but his family didn't have the money. In 1938, he got the money and he went to the Kolkata Art College. He stayed there for three years and then he left. He travelled around Asia and Europe and painted rivers, trees and villages and its people. Then he came back to Bangladesh. He painted pictures of the farmers and fishermen of Bangladesh.

People around the world know about Sultan and his paintings. He exhibited his paintings along with the famous painters, Pablo Picasso and Salvador Dali.



Sultan loved children. He established 'Nandakanon' and 'Shishuwargo' for children. Here they could get some education and learn painting. Every year, there is a Sultan Mela in Narail. He died in 1994 at a hospital in Jashore.

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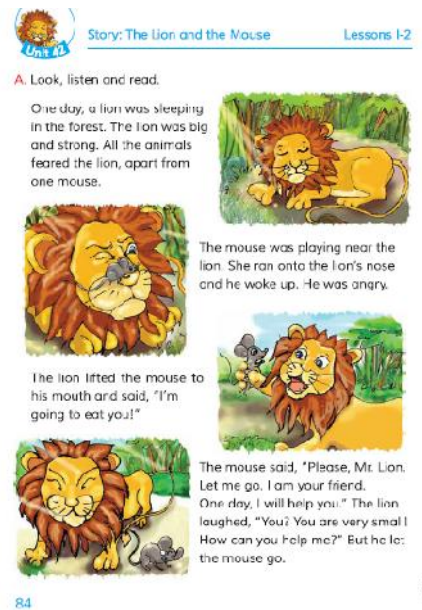
68

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Flesch Reading Ease Score for Class IV English Textbook} &= 206.835 - 1.014 \times (100 \div 9) \\ &- 84.6 \times (115 \div 100) \\ &= 98.27 \end{aligned}$$

The Flesch Reading Ease score for the fourth-grade English for Today textbook is calculated to be 98.27, indicating that the text is highly readable. According to the Flesch scale, a score between 90 and 100 signifies that the material is easy to understand. Therefore, this score confirms that the textbook is accessible and suitable for its target audience, enhancing students' reading experience. The high readability reflects the textbook's alignment with educational standards, ensuring that students can engage effectively with the content.

Legibility Analysis with Uses and Gratifications Theory: The legibility of the English for Today textbook is influenced by several design elements, including typeface, line spacing, layout, colors, images, and illustrations. While Arial, a sans-serif font, is used at size 13.5, it reduces legibility and slows reading speed, especially in body text. The textbook primarily uses left alignment, though alignment varies according to layout and grid design. Color usage is consistent, but chapter headings lack visibility. Line and word spacing, along with white space, are well-managed, and the images and illustrations effectively support text comprehension. Given the young readership, serif typefaces are recommended for body text to enhance readability. The book does, however, maintain proper use of upper- and lowercase letters, contributing to a balanced design. Figure 7 illustrates a sample page from Unit 42.

Figure 7. Unit 42 of the English Textbook



The clarity of a textbook is crucial for reader satisfaction, as highlighted by the Uses and Gratification Theory, which becomes relevant only when the reader is content. Although the various elements of the English for Today textbook can be understood individually, the chosen font—used for long reading sessions—can cause discomfort and irritation. This may detract from the overall reading experience, affecting the reader's engagement with the material.

Analysis in terms of Educational Psychology: Educational psychology, which focuses on how students learn and how to teach them effectively, plays a key role in shaping the English for Today textbook for fourth-grade students. Recognizing that students' abilities to absorb and retain knowledge vary, the textbook incorporates exercises, pair-work, role-plays, and practical lessons that align with educational psychology principles. These activities allow students to apply what they learn in daily life. Visual aids, which are essential for memory retention according to educational psychology, are used extensively throughout the book. Additionally, the textbook combines reading, writing, and discussion-based modules, providing opportunities for students to experiment and learn through hands-on experiences.

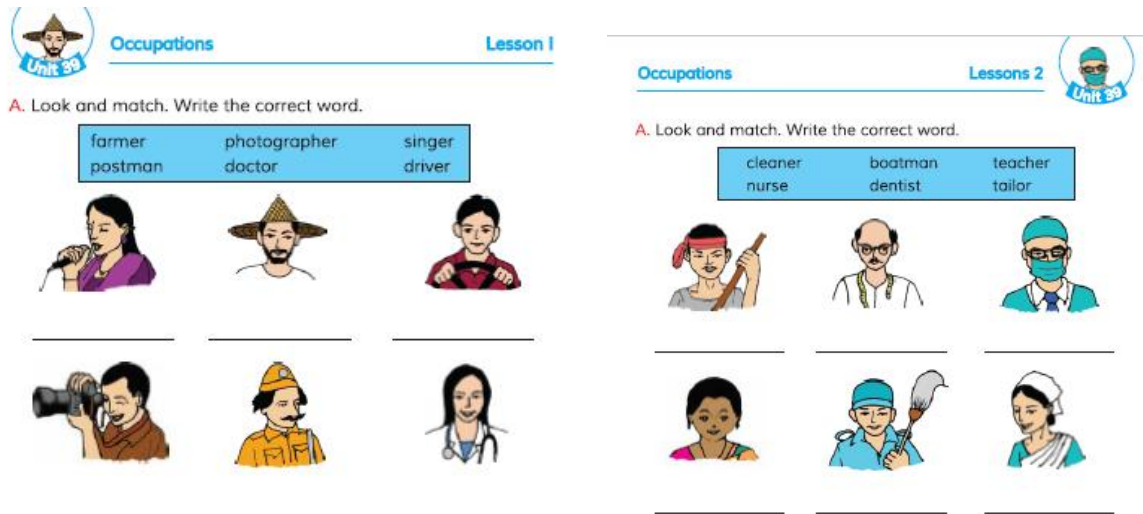
Inclusive Representation in the Textbook: Inclusive representation in textbooks involves the integration of individuals from various classes, professions, tribes, religions, and castes to ensure that all members of society feel acknowledged and valued. This approach not only fosters a sense of belonging among students but also encourages respect for diverse perspectives, ultimately promoting social cohesion. However, the analysis reveals a lack of inclusive representation in the fourth-grade English textbook, with some evidence of diversity appearing only in the fifth or sixth standard materials.

Furthermore, the chapter titled "Occupations" in Unit 39 illustrates a concerning division of professions by gender, which is outdated and in need of immediate revision. It is essential to convey the message that individuals of all genders can pursue any profession. To effectively reflect this idea, the inclusion of illustrations depicting both men and women in roles such as drivers and doctors is crucial, as it challenges traditional gender norms and emphasizes that no profession is inherently linked to a specific gender, caste, or religion. Additionally, it is important to highlight the

capabilities of individuals with disabilities, showcasing their ability to succeed in various professions.

As illustrated in Figure 8, the lessons from Unit 39 of the English textbook must be updated to reflect these values of inclusivity and equality in representation, ensuring that educational materials resonate with the diverse fabric of society.

Figure 8. Unit 39 of this English Textbook



1.2.3 Critical Analysis

The fourth-grade English textbook has undergone a comprehensive analysis, covering several critical aspects. This includes:

- A review of the textbook's physical aspects.
- A detailed analysis of its content.
- An examination of the examples, illustrations, and images presented.
- An assessment of the structure and use of language.

This multi-faceted analysis provides a holistic understanding of the textbook, offering insights into its effectiveness in terms of physical presentation, content delivery, and the use of visual and linguistic elements to support learning.

Analysis in the light of physical aspect: In this phase, the analysis focuses on the textbook's physical aspects, which include the printing layout, durability, font size, line and word spacing, cover page design, typing and grammatical errors, and overall portability. These factors are crucial in determining the textbook's usability and accessibility for students. Figure 9 visually represents the analysis process concerning these physical elements, highlighting how these attributes contribute to the effectiveness of the educational material.

Figure 9. Analysis in the light of physical aspect



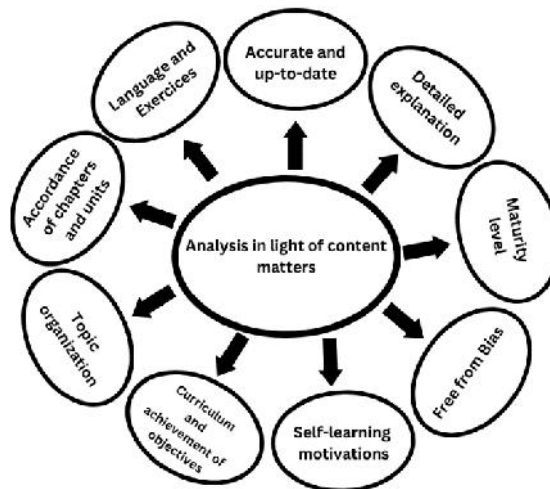
The analysis of the fourth-grade English textbook's physical aspects reveals several key findings:

- **Printing Layout:** The printing layout is adequately legible.
- **Durability:** The book's durability is lacking, as pages tend to loosen by mid-year. It is bound with side staples and adhesive, which affects its longevity.
- **Font Size:** A font size of 13.5 is used, which is considered optimal for readability.
- **Spacing Between Lines and Words:** Adequate spacing between lines and words is maintained, enhancing legibility.
- **Cover Design:** The cover prominently features three colors—red, green, and yellow—reminiscent of traffic lights. However, it lacks inclusive representation, and the addition of illustrations depicting both boys and girls would be more appropriate.
- **Typing and Grammatical Errors:** Minimal typing and grammatical errors were observed.
- **Portability:** The book's dimensions (24×18 cm) make it easily portable, adding to its convenience for students.

These findings suggest areas for improvement, particularly in durability and inclusive representation on the cover.

Analysis in light of content matters: The evaluation of the textbook has focused on several key criteria: its accuracy and currency, the clarity of explanations, age appropriateness, and freedom from bias. Additionally, the assessment considers whether it encourages self-learning, meets the curriculum objectives, manages topics effectively, aligns chapters and units appropriately, and uses language and exercises that are suitable for students. This comprehensive review highlights the importance of ensuring educational materials are effective and relevant for learners. Figure 10 illustrates the analysis process regarding these content issues.

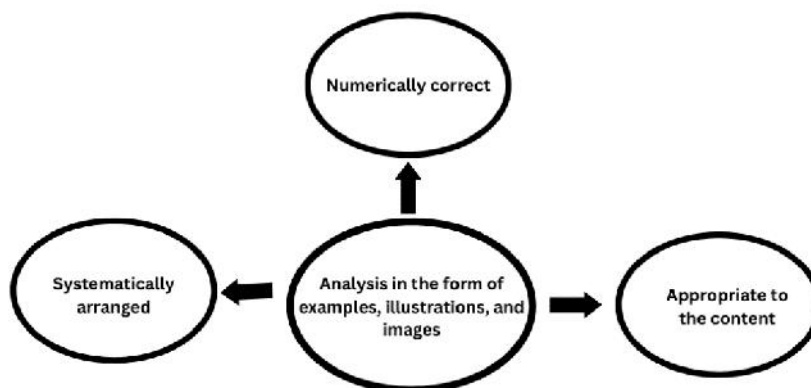
Figure 10. Analysis in light of content matters



- **Accurate and Up-to-Date:** The evaluation of the fourth-grade textbook indicates that, while it is accurate in many aspects, it lacks comprehensiveness and up-to-date content. Important contemporary subjects, like the Padma Bridge and Metrorail, are missing, and outdated representations of gender-based professions could impact students' understanding. The content is aligned with the 2013 academic year, making it less current. Figure 10 illustrates the analysis of these issues.
- **Detailed Explanation:** The textbook provides adequate detailed explanations, supported by numerous images and corresponding explanations.
- **Maturity Level:** The content is suitable for the age range of the intended students, as confirmed by a readability test.
- **Free from Bias:** Although the book is largely free from bias, it lacks inclusive representation, and certain profession-based stereotypes should be revised.
- **Self-Learning Motivations:** It includes exercises that encourage self-learning, such as teaching time management through clocks and calendars, helping students apply these skills in real-life situations.
- **Curriculum and Achievement of Objectives:** The textbook successfully meets the curriculum objectives, aligning with the educational goals set for the grade level.
- **Topic Organization:** The content is well-organized, utilizing dialogues, rhymes, and stories to engage students.
- **Accordance of Chapters and Units:** The chapters and units are well-structured and adequately organized.
- **Language and Exercises:** The vocabulary is appropriate for the grade level, and the exercises are practical, aiding students' real-life application.

Analysis in the form of examples, illustrations, and images: The analysis of examples, illustrations, and pictures in the textbook focuses on their numerical accuracy, content relevance, and systematic arrangement. Figure 11 illustrates the process of this analysis, highlighting the importance of ensuring that visual elements effectively support the text.

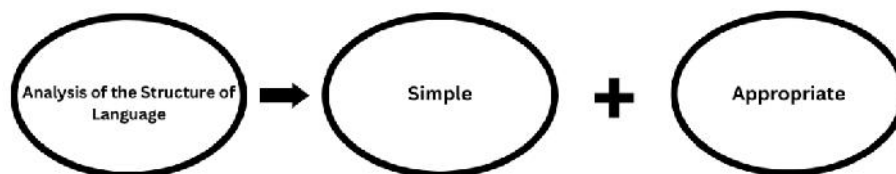
Figure 11. Analysis in the form of examples, illustrations, and images



- Numerical Correctness: The textbook accurately presents examples, illustrations, and images in proper numerical order, with no errors detected.
- Appropriateness to the Content: The illustrations are well-aligned with the content, enhancing understanding and making the material more accessible for students.
- Systematic Arrangement: Examples, illustrations, and pictures are systematically organized, ensuring that the information is presented in a clear and comprehensible manner for students.

Analysis of the Structure of Language: The observation of the textbook reveals that it primarily uses simple and age-appropriate language, making it suitable for the intended student group. However, in certain sections, the text incorporates words and phrases designed to stimulate students' curiosity, encouraging them to explore and learn new concepts with the guidance of their teacher. Figure 12 illustrates the analysis of the structure of language used in the textbook.

Figure 12. Analysis of the Structure of Language



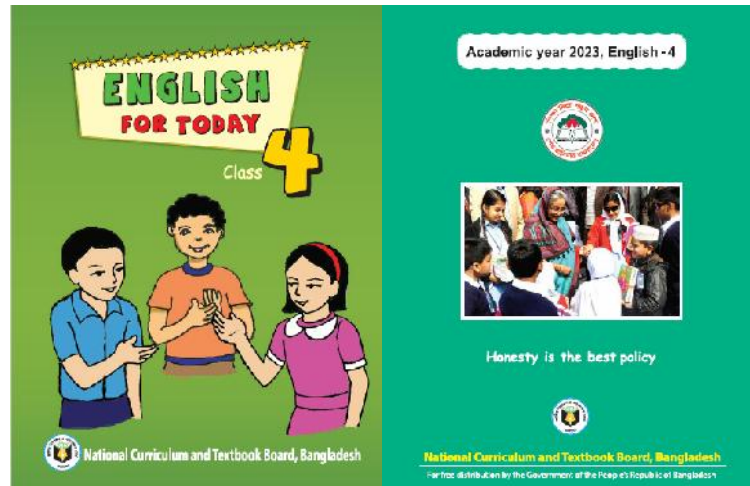
1.3 Impact on Life skills

The textbook offers various units and chapters designed to equip students with practical skills for real-life situations. The "About Me" chapter helps students understand themselves and how to present themselves to others. Chapters on topics such as greetings, family trees, classroom language, shopping, and making requests introduce everyday scenarios, preparing students to navigate them effectively. Lessons on traffic lights, traffic rules, and different professions further provide real-world knowledge. Additionally, chapters on calendaring and timekeeping teach essential time management skills. The book's exercises enhance students' proficiency, while letter-writing practices and reading materials at the end of the book improve their language skills. Together, these elements contribute to shaping students into capable and efficient citizens.

1.4 Criticism of the Book

Cover page: The cover of the textbook is described as unappealing for children, with suggestions for improvement including the addition of vibrant illustrations and incorporating the story's lion. Enhancing the back cover with images of baby boys and girls along with basic English vocabulary could also make it more engaging. The primary colors used are green, yellow, and red. While Hashem Khan is credited as the illustration editor, since 2013, NCTB has altered the illustrations without his permission, leading to disproportionate visuals—a situation highlighted as unfortunate by Pintu (2017). Figure 13 showcases the front and back cover of the English for Today textbook for class 4.

Figure 13. Front and Back cover of the textbook



Binding: The book's binding, consisting of stapled sides and glued covers, lacks durability, often coming apart within 1-2 months, indicating the need for a stronger binding method.

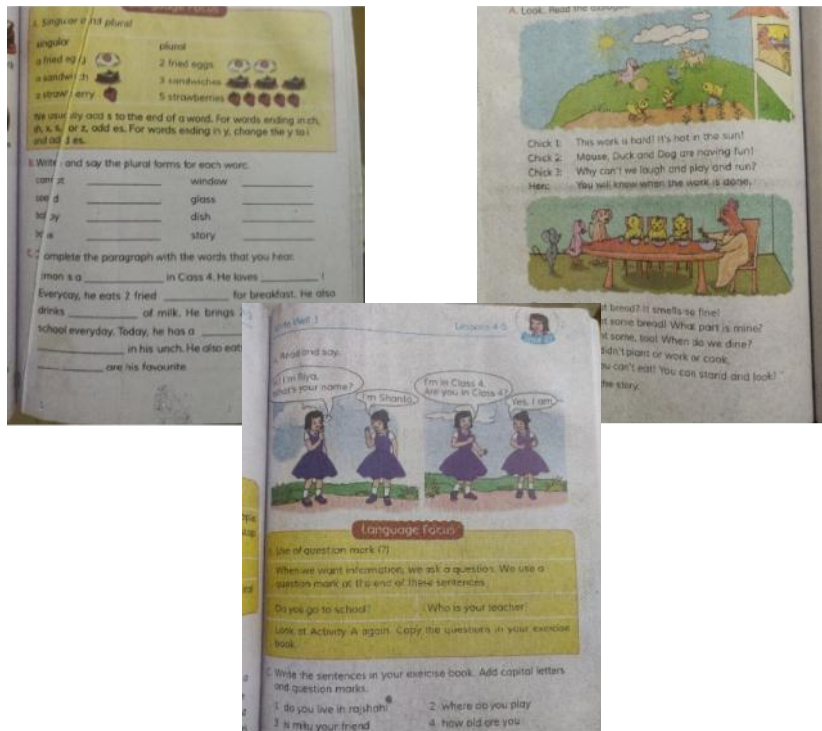
Printing Quality: The printing quality is substandard, characterized by dull and fuzzy text that diminishes readability.

Paper Quality: Despite NCTB's tender conditions requiring 80 gsm paper with 85% brightness, the actual paper brightness is only 65-70% (Kalerkantho, 2019). Low-quality newsprint paper has been used, giving the book a dirty appearance that fails to engage readers.

Readability Issues: The poor paper and printing quality make the book less appealing for both children and adults, with ghosting and creased pages being common problems.

Visual Evidence: Figure 14 includes sample images that illustrate the book's printing and paper quality issues.

Figure 14. Sample pictures to understand Printing and Paper Quality



DISCUSSION

English textbook “English for Today” for grade four students aligns with social constructivism theory as it promotes social interaction and practical learning through chapters about traffic lights and real-world scenarios. Additionally, the textbook follows all levels of Bloom’s taxonomy (remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating) by promoting cognitive as well as psychomotor skills. Likewise, Junito (2021) reported that the “English for Health” coursebook accommodated Bloom’s Taxonomy, specifically the Revised Bloom’s Taxonomy, by including various types of cognitive questions. The textbook of the present study increases the effectiveness of learning process by introducing different learning styles (i.e. visual, auditory, read/write, and kinesthetic), corresponding to the VARK model. Chandra et al. (2018) suggested that the VARK model can enhance the development of reading and writing skills in young learners. Additionally, Valle-Escobedo et al. (2024) emphasized the need of integrating VARK model in shaping educational strategies that align with students’ learning styles. In terms of readability, Rizkiani et al. (2022) evaluated the complexity of eleven texts and found varying levels ranging from “easy” to “difficult”. In this study, the readability analysis found high reading ease score (98.27), indicating the appropriateness of this book. Moreover, the legibility analysis approves the font size but suggests the use of serif typefaces in order to improve reading speed. Amanbayeva et al. (2022) revealed the significance of psycholinguistic principles in textbook design and highlights that textbooks must align with students’ existing knowledge and understanding to be effective. “English for Today” textbook accommodates educational psychology as it supports learning by visual aids, interactive activities and real-life examples and facilitates better retention rate and knowledge application. Zheng et al. (2024) reported significant gender biases in popular English language textbooks utilized in Chinese secondary schools. They studied the under-representation of females in textbooks which may affect the gender identity formation and their perceptions of

societal roles. Similarly, "English for Today" textbook lacks inclusive representation, particularly regarding gender roles and portrayal of individuals with disabilities.

One could argue that the English textbook English for Today is a suitable and appropriate choice for fourth-graders. The content of the textbook is true to the right usage of the English language and focuses on daily activities and cultural practices that uplift and educate Bangladeshi students. Additionally, the textbook neglects to expose students to a range of other cultures despite the fact that language instruction materials have to include a diversity of cultural elements. It might inspire and heighten their desire to study a language (McKay, 2002). This book has excellent language that is easy to understand, appropriate, secure, instructional, and simple for younger readers. In order to aid children in remembering and understanding information or content, the book contains illustrations in addition to sample phrases or sentences. The images in this textbook are polite and enjoyable, appropriate for fourth graders, and designed to support learning. The fourth-grade English textbook English for Today is suitable for use in the teaching process by teachers and young learners alike, according to the study's findings. The book needs improvements to make it more appealing and accessible to a diverse range of people, including physically disabled and minors. The cover page should be more colorful and include eye-catching pictures, while the government and stakeholders should provide insight to ensure paper quality. The book should include more women authors and illustrations editors to reflect gender equality. The print quality should be better, with serif typeface for body text. Chapter titles should be presented in a more interesting and bold way, and graphics, illustrations, and photos should be more understandable. The textbooks should be more interactive, with interactive elements like lion movements and species information. Reference videos should be created to help students understand lessons, and QR codes should be used to provide links to videos or recitals. Additionally, a definition or chapter on pronouns, verbs, and the present tense should be included.

CONCLUSION

The "English for Today" fourth-grade textbook, provided by the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) of Bangladesh, aims to improve students' English proficiency through engaging activities. It integrates social constructivism theory, Bloom's taxonomy, and the VARK model to support effective learning, and its readability score of 98.27 ensures clarity. The content effectively covers essential vocabulary, real-life scenarios, and focuses on skills like command instructions, speaking, punctuation, and comprehension. However, the textbook has some shortcomings, including an unappealing cover, poor printing quality, substandard paper, and a lack of inclusivity. Updates to include contemporary subjects like the Padma Bridge and Metrorail, as well as improvements in printing and durability, would make the textbook a more effective and engaging resource for young learners. Addressing these areas would significantly enhance its impact on language learning for Bangladeshi students.

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