Teaching and Assessment of English Reading Skill at Secondary Level in Bangladesh: Practices and Challenges

A dissertation submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Certificate

It is my pleasure to certify that this dissertation titled *Teaching and Assessment of English Reading Skill at Secondary Level in Bangladesh: Practices and Challenges* is based upon original research conducted by its author Mr Ranjit Podder, a doctoral student at the Institute of Education and Research (IER), University of Dhaka and a candidate for the entrance to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of Dhaka University. The dissertation is complete and may be submitted for examination.

I would like to recommend and forward this dissertation to the University of Dhaka through the Institute of Education and Research (IER) for necessary formalities leading to its acceptance in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.).

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Declaration by the researcher

I do hereby declare that this dissertation titled *Teaching and Assessment of English Reading Skill at Secondary Level in Bangladesh: Practices and Challenges* submitted to the Institute of Education and Research (IER), University of Dhaka for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) is an original work of mine. This dissertation has not been submitted to any other university or institute for any degree or diploma.

Ranjit Podder
Ph.D. Researcher

In my capacity as the supervisor of this doctoral dissertation, I certify that the above statement is true to the best of my knowledge.

Professor Dr. Mariam Begum
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List of Acronyms

AfL: Assessment for Learning

AoL: Assessment of Learning

BA: Bachelor of Arts

BC: British Council

B.Ed.: Bachelor of Education

B.Ed. Ag.: Bachelor of Education in Agriculture

BEDU: Bangladesh Examination Development Unit

BIDE: Bangladesh Institute of Distance Education

BISE: Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education

BP. Ed: Bachelor of Physical Education

B.Sc.: Bachelor of Science

BRAC: Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee

CA: Continuous Assessment

CEFR: Common European Framework of Reference (for language learning)

C. in Ed.: Certificate in Education

CLT: Communicative Language Teaching

CPD: Continuous Professional Development

Dip-in-Ed.: Diploma in Education

DSHE: Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education

EAP: English for Academic Purposes

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

EfT: *English for Today*

EiA: English in Action

EJLT: EDRC (Educational Development and Research Council) Journal of Learning and Teaching

ELT: English Language Teaching

ELTIP: English Language Teaching Improvement Project

FGD: Focus Group Discussion

FSSAP: Female Secondary School Assistance Project

GTM: Grammar Translation Method

GW: Group Work

HSC: Higher Secondary Certificate

IELTS: International English Language Testing System

IER: Institute of Education and Research

IERS: Intensive-Extensive Reading Strategies

IW: Individual Work

L1: Mother Language

L2: Second Language

LO: Learning Outcomes

MA: Master of Arts

MCQ: Multiple Choice Question

M.Ed.: Master of Education

MEW: Monitoring and Evaluation Wing

MoE: Ministry of Education

M. Phil: Master of Philosophy

MUET: Malaysian University English Test

NAEM: National Academy for Educational Management

NCTB: National Curriculum and Textbook Board

NEP: National Education Policy

PEC: Primary Education Completion Examination

PGD in Ed.: Postgraduate Diploma in Education

Ph.D.: Doctor of Philosophy

PW: Pair Work

RC: Researcher's Comment

SEQAEP: Secondary Education Quality and Access Enhancement Project

SA: Summative Assessment

SBA: School Based Assessment

SESIP: Secondary Education Sector Improvement Project

SSC: Secondary School Certificate

TP: Teaching Practice

T1:   Teacher 1

T2: Teacher 2

T3: Teacher 3

T4: Teacher 4

TCG: Teachers' Curriculum Guide/Teacher's Curriculum Guide

TG: Teachers' Guide/Teacher's Guide

TOEFL: Test of English as a Foreign Language

TTC: Teachers' Training College

TQI-SEP: Teaching Quality Improvement in Secondary Education Project

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

UNMC: University of Nottingham, Malaysia Campus

USA: United States of America

D e d i c a t e d t o

My Late Parents

Sharat Chandra Podder and Sahochari Podder

whose love, care, and blessings helped me walk this far.

Abstract

This qualitative study tried to explore Bangladeshi secondary English teachers' and students' understanding of English reading skill; strategies secondary English teachers employed to teach and assess English reading skill; resources used in teaching and assessment; English reading skill assessment practices in schools; barriers teachers faced in teaching and assessing reading; and the possible ways to improve the teaching and assessment in schools. The study employed semi-structured interviews with four English teachers from two secondary schools in Dhaka city; observed five teaching sessions of each of the four teachers for long 11 months from January to November in 2017; organised Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with 40 students in four equal groups. 10 learners in each group were selected through lottery from grades IX and X of the selected schools. Additionally, documents such as the *National Curriculum* (NCTB, 2012a); *English for Today* (NCTB, 2012b)*; English Grammar and Composition* (NCTB, 2016); Sample Test prepared by NCTB (Appendix 8); Guidelines for the Test Setters and Markers for English (Appendix 10); a test (question paper) used in a half-yearly examination of a school (Appendix 9) were analysed. One Curriculum Specialist from the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) and a teacher educator from a Govt. Teachers' Training College, Bangladesh were also interviewed with a semi-structured interview schedule (Appendix 7). The data collected through interviews, observations, and FGDs were transcribed, coded, and then categorised based on the major themes emerged during data analysis. During transcribing, coding, and categorising of the data, findings of the study emerged. The major findings of the study included teachers and students did not

have clear understanding of English reading skill; English reading teaching was influenced by GTM, not by the NCTB-suggested three stages; teachers did not comply with the curriculum guidelines regarding continuous assessment (CA) or assessment for learning (AfL) and they partly followed the guidelines regarding assessment of learning (AoL) or summative assessment; teachers used commercially produced materials to teach English reading skill instead of the NCTB-prepared materials; the major challenges faced by teachers in teaching of reading included teachers' lack of understanding, large classes, workload, short time allotted for each period, and students' lack of interest in reading. Regarding assessment of reading, like other countries (Balfakeh, 2009; Marland, 2003), the Bangladeshi teachers, too, had wrong conception of assessment. Moreover, the inclusion of seen passages; insufficient training of teachers; and lack of monitoring and supervision from the education authority were some of the challenges. The identified challenges can be minimised through organising rigorous training for teachers in teaching and assessment of reading, large class management, and through introducing monitoring followed by constructive feedback.

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Prelude

Reading is one of the four basic skills of English language and is vital to success in one's life (Billah, 2014). Being able to read with understanding is highly esteemed for social and economic development (Cathrine, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). Clarke, Truelove, Hulme, and Snowling (2014) claim that, when a reader comprehends a piece of written text successfully, reading can be awesomely inspiring, enjoyable, and a transforming agent for him/her. Moreover, Clarke et al. (2014, p.1) claim, "Text can inform and develop knowledge, provide us with new vocabulary and provoke new ways of thinking". Higher education also depends much on reading comprehension skill of a student (Bright & McGregor, 1977). Bright and McGregor (1977) further claim that if there is little reading, there would be a little language learning. "Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man" (Bacon, 1696 found in Dr. Sen, p. 146) writes English philosopher Sir Francis Bacon (1561 – 1626).

Ur (2011) asserts that reading skill should be practised so that learners can cope with more sophisticated text and tasks and can deal with them competently, aptly, and skillfully. As reading skill development is so important to make a completely developed and skilled citizen and English is considered as one of the most used international languages in the world, Bangladesh primary and secondary curricula attach added importance to the development of English reading skill of learners. "All the four basic language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) would be practised in class" (NCTB, 2012a, p. 73). Although English reading skill development

gets importance in Bangladesh secondary curriculum, the proper teaching-learning, and assessment of English reading skill does not receive so much importance in the implementation process. Both the curriculum reports (NCTB, 2012a & 1995) puts emphasis on developing the English reading skill of students studying in grades nine and ten to "understand written instructions, narrative and descriptive texts, argumentative texts, formal and informal letters, appropriately selected and, if necessary, adapted texts" (NCTB, 2012, p. 83; & 1995, p. 138;). Additionally, curriculum 2012a and 1995 expect students to be able to use dictionaries, reference works, and to read extensively with appropriate speed. They are also expected to be able to skim for the gist, scan for specific information, infer meanings of words and sentences from the context, distinguish facts from opinions, draw conclusion after reading, recognise the uses of different linkers, punctuations and graphological devices.

Although learners start learning to read at the beginning of their student life, they read to learn very soon and reading becomes one of the best ways to gather more knowledge. Reading is an effective way of learning to communicate in the target language (McCray, Vaughn, & Neal, 2001). English is being taught as a compulsory subject in Bangladesh from class one to twelve and beyond, the researcher's experiences as a formerly secondary English teacher and currently as a teacher educator for the last 22 years show that the level of English reading skill of Bangladesh secondary school leavers is below the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) for languages set for the secondary level learners (British Council, 2019). The NCTB expects that the secondary school leavers would achieve pre-intermediate level of English but the competencies set by them are equivalent to intermediate level of CEFR which is B1 or IELTS score 5 in individual skill (British

Council, 2019). Intermediate level is as described 'I can speak and understand reasonably well and can use basic tenses but have problems with more complex grammar and vocabulary' or in other words, the learners labeled as intermediate can use the language independently with the native users with necessary fluency (The London School of English, 2019). The NCTB claims that the secondary school leavers will 'develop competence in all four language skills – listening, speaking, reading, and writing; use competence for effective communication in real life situations'; and 'there will also be provisions for using supplementary reading materials to develop learners' reading skills' (NCTB, 2012a, pp.73-74). As similar curriculum (NCTB, 1995) has started to be implemented from 1995, it should have been investigated earlier to check if the curriculum set expectations regarding English reading skill teaching, learning, and assessment are being fulfilled or not.

1.2 Background of the Study

English language is taught in Bangladesh secondary level institutions as a compulsory foreign language. It is taught as a compulsory subject from class one to twelve and beyond. Since the creation of Bangladesh in 1971, English has been continued to be taught at primary and secondary levels of education, and beyond despite a national policy favouring Bangla. The Bengali Language Introduction Act 1987 puts emphasis on the use of Bangla for record keeping, laws, legal actions, and proceedings; as well as in government offices, courts, official and semi-official correspondences, except in the case of foreign relations, and autonomous institutions (Ministry of Establishment, 1987) and that Act affects the use of English in those domains (Banu & Sussex, 2001). Language policy documents and government memoranda concerning the use of Bangla in the offices and courts indicate the weak status of English in Bangladesh at that time (Banu & Sussex, 2001). The Quodrat-e-Khuda Education Commission

(1974) exempts students of classes one to five from learning English (Bangladesh College-University Shikkhok Samity, p. 15) but the 1976 National Curriculum Committee makes English compulsory from class three.

The aforesaid Bengali Language Introduction Act attaches so much importance to Bangla that it warns the government officials that "if anyone puts forward an appeal at any of the institutions mentioned, in any other language than Bengali, it will be considered as illegal" (Ministry of Establishment, 1987). Bangla was declared as one of the state languages of Pakistan in 1956; and after the independence of Bangladesh in1971, it still enjoyed the status of the state language of Bangladesh. Due to the government directives to use Bangla in every field of official communications, the teachers' as well as students' level of motivation to learn and use English declines, which results in low quality of English in the country (Banu & Sussex, 2001). Moreover, the Bangladeshi people have a strong sentiment for Bangla, having sacrificed many valuable lives in 1952 in order to retain the right to speak Bangla. Later on, many Bangladeshi people also regarded English as equally important for personal, economic, national, and international reasons.

Although English is taught as a compulsory subject in primary and secondary level educational institutions in Bangladesh for a period of 12 years and beyond, most Bangladeshi students cannot communicate well orally, do not understand when others speak English, unable to write correct English, and fail to comprehend when they read a piece of authentic text in English. In fact, Imam (2005) reports that the average level of English language skill of university students was equivalent to that which was set by the government for the students of class seven. In order to address the low levels of English language achievement, the government of Bangladesh introduced Communicative English Teaching (CLT) to class six in 1996 and then to other classes

at the secondary level on an incremental basis. Textbooks called *English for Today* (EfT) are currently used from classes six to ten, and textbooks of the same title are also taught at primary and higher secondary levels. The National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) has prepared Teachers' Curriculum Guides (TCGs), for those text books to enable English teachers to implement the curriculum properly.

However, despite the theoretical shift from a traditional to a more communicative mode of teaching and learning English in Bangladesh, the physical facilities and the teaching-learning approaches actually employed have remained much the same over the last forty seven years after independence of the country. Secondary English teachers in Bangladesh have been trained in English through projects such as the English Language Teaching Improvement Project (ELTIP), Female Secondary School Assistance Project (FSSAP), Secondary Education Sector Improvement Project (SESIP), Teaching Quality Improvement in Secondary Education Project (TQI-SEP); and by some other non-government organisations such as the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) and English in Action (EiA).

However, despite these training programmes and the priority given to CLT approaches in the National Curriculum 2012a and 1995, many teachers in Bangladesh continue to teach using the Grammar Translation Method (GTM). Podder (2014) claims that most Bangladeshi students usually pass the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examinations with good grades in English but their grades are not reflected in their real-life use of English. Monitoring and Evaluation Wing (MEW) of Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE) conducts a study (MEW, 2014) on the institutions where SEQAEP provided interventions and the study is conducted with 7143 Grade 6, and 7169 Grade 8 students from 309 schools located in 125 Upazillas

and reports that "The fundamental skill of reading comprehension remain the same across grade levels" (p. 9).

The first Education Commission of Bangladesh, which is popularly known as the Qudrat-e-Khuda Education Commission, spelt out the importance and the place of English language in the commission report in 1974. The commission recommended that although the medium of instruction at all levels would be Bangla, English should be taught as a compulsory foreign language at primary and secondary levels, as it was before the independence of the country in 1971. However, English education in Bangladesh has not always enjoyed equal importance over the last four and a half decades and the teaching and assessment of the four language skills has never received proper judgment. The present curriculum (NCTB, 2012a, p. 78) claims, "Practice in language use should go beyond the textbook and include life situation" but the experiences of the researcher do not tell him that the curriculum expectation is not being implemented properly in the schools. Additionally, the same curriculum (NCTB, 2012a, p. 83) expects that the learners will read text to 'understand and enjoy stories and other texts (descriptive, adaptive, and authentic), read and recite poems'.

However, in reality, the Bangladeshi secondary English teachers read out the text and students remain inactive because teachers believe that students would not understand unless they read out and clarify. The international scenario of reading teaching and assessment is not also satisfactory. A study by Hollenbeck, Feiker, Kalchman, and Mindy (2013) conducted in America reports that even after professional development training, teachers' conception about reading skill was not clear and they suggested that there should be sufficient supports for conceptual change of teachers. Hoveid and Hoveid (2013) claim that reading is an important activity and that activity has been threatened by teachers' lack of understanding or misunderstanding of regarding

reading skill teaching. A study administered with 422 grade 10 students reveals that a large number of Kenyan learners encountered challenges with reading comprehension and vocabulary hampering their English language proficiency (Athiemoolan & Kibul, 2012). Another study conducted in the USA with 14 secondary teachers revealed that eight out of those 14 teachers avoided reading activities claiming them useless. "It is useless. Most of the kids cannot read the text. Whatever they learn, they learn through lecture and discussion. All verbal", claimed Smith (Smith, n.d.). Most of the Bangladeshi secondary teachers possess similar beliefs as stated.

In the stated circumstances, the researcher believes that it is time to investigate if the teachers are implementing the curriculum properly or not. The same curriculum report further suggests that there should be continuous assessment throughout the months instead of monthly tests, and teachers are advised to be careful to assess all the four macro skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) of the English language. Students are expected to be skilled in reading alongside listening, speaking, and writing. Studies have evidence that innovative formative assessment designed to strengthen frequent feedback provides substantial learning gains (Black & William 1998; Furtak, Morrison, & Kroog, 2014; Johnston & Costello, 2005). However, the researcher's experiences show that English reading skill teaching and assessment is a neglected area in secondary level institutions in Bangladesh.

A research report (Podder, 2016, p. 33) discloses that, although secondary students pass the SSC examinations with good grades in English, "They fail to understand when they read a piece of text in English". Chaudhury and Karim (2014) claim from the findings of a study conducted with tertiary students that in reality, reading abilities of students in Bangladesh is not satisfactory although it is supposed that reading skill practices in English are more emphasised in Bangladesh.

NCTB (2012a) claims that English is a skill-based subject and for that reason all the four basic skills of English language should be practised in the classrooms. Interactive activities were encouraged and in order to practise English language, teachers are instructed to go beyond the textbooks and they are encouraged to include real life situations so that learning happens in context. The said curriculum keeps provision to use supplementary reading materials to develop learners' reading skill through continuous practices. The curriculum (NCTB, 2012a & 1995) expects, "Teacher selects/prepares reading materials (textbook and other authentic materials including pictures, diagrams, graphs and charts, literary pieces, etc.) and organises, facilitates, guides, monitors reading activities" (NCTB, 2012a, pp. 79-80) and "Students read silently for scanning, skimming, inferring and interacting students and teachers, sharing opinions, making dialogues, asking and answering questions, taking part in group discussions/debates, and describing/narrating something" (NCTB, 2012a, pp. 79-80).

Moreover, students read and do while/post reading activities such as MCQ, gap filling, true-false, matching, open ended questions, information transfer, describing charts, graphs, and so on. Students' ability to read and comprehend authentic texts and answer higher order questions would be assessed, claimed the curriculum (NCTB, 2012a). Ebrahim (2016) claims that students' participation in reading must be ensured as practices with concentration develop their reading skill. Ebrahim (2017) asserts that reading is a receptive skill and learners must be involved in the practice of the reading skill as no skill can be acquired without ceaseless practices. In order to make it happen, teachers should set some questions beforehand so that students can answer during and after reading the text. Those reading questions could be short questions, gap-filling, true/false, matching, information transfer, etc. Students are supposed to read the text themselves, understand, and internalise meaning of the text, and then answer the

questions. Ko (2013) claims that although readers start reading with word recognition, ultimately, they have to process the pieces of information contained in the texts. From the teachers' standpoint, alleges Ko (2013), although teachers start teaching *forms* in the beginning, they have to go for *meaning* of the text since functional literacy aims at producing skilled manpower for the marketplace and the critical literacy or critical reading challenges the texts, ideas, and established norms of the society as texts contain social practices and hidden agenda or ideologies to materialise. However, the researcher's experiences as a teacher educator, who has to deal with the secondary English teachers, show that nothing like that happens in the secondary level institutions.

An excerpt from Podder (2012, p. 42) depicts a discouraging picture of reading-teaching practices at secondary level of education in Bangladesh. According to the observation field notes: "Atanu taught a speaking-focused lesson (the lesson also focuses reading and writing) in class ten (class ten, unit 10, lesson 1, topic: Meeting Feroza). He reads out and explains the text line by line although the reading is for students' individual reading". Students' low level of achievement in reading skill and ample proof of faulty teaching practices motivates the researcher to conduct a rigorous research to check what teachers and students understand by reading skill; what strategies they employ to teach this skill; what resources they use in teaching reading in schools; how they assess the reading skill; what the barriers are in teaching reading skill to students; and how to improve the teaching and assessment of reading in secondary level institutions.

Vocabulary instruction is considered to be important all over the world as children with larger vocabulary understand text better than others with a small word stock (Fletcher et al., 2009). Ko (2013) maintains that in reading skill teaching, literal meaning of the text is desired but in the critical literacy instruction, meaning in-

between the lines and beyond the text is targeted. However, Like New Zealand secondary teachers, Bangladeshi secondary teachers also are not aware of the importance of the five components of reading instruction and they believe that comprehension would naturally occur in the process of reading (Fletcher, Parkhill, & Greenwood, 2009). Being aware of the five components of reading which include the alphabet knowledge, phonemic awareness, oral reading fluency, vocabulary knowledge, and text comprehension makes a teacher proficient in reading and the teacher can consciously and effectively use those in their teaching and assessment of reading (Tsai, 2009; Paris, 2009; Cervetti & Hiebert, 2015). The current study focuses more on the comprehension instruction of texts although other components including vocabulary instruction may often take place; and it also focuses on assessment and testing of reading skill in schools aiming at achieving reading comprehension skill of the readers.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

The curriculum expects that at the end of class ten, students will be able to read and understand simple texts in English (NCTB, 2012a). The experiences of the researcher show that the English reading skill level of the students in secondary schools is not as expected in the curriculum. Ebrahim (2017) reports that teachers do not teach and assess English reading skill in the ways as are suggested by the curriculum planners. Imam (2005) reports that the overall English language skills of university students are equivalent to that set by the government for the students of class seven. The experiences of the researcher as a formerly secondary school English teacher and later on as a teacher educator show that teaching and assessment of reading is a neglected area at the implementation level. Therefore, in order to get rid of the poor reading

teaching and assessment situation, it should be investigated to know where the problems lie.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study is to learn what the secondary English teachers and students understand by reading; what strategies teachers employ in teaching and assessing English reading skill; English teachers' compliance with the curriculum guidelines (NCTB, 2012a & 2012b) in teaching and assessment of English reading skill; use of the NCTB-prepared textbooks and the TCG; how teachers assess reading skill in schools; what barriers teachers face in teaching and assessing English reading skill in secondary schools; and how the teaching and assessment of reading can be improved in schools. Learning about the mentioned glitches are important to the researcher as he is a teacher educator who has to deal with secondary English teachers in different in-service training sessions as well as in the B.Ed. programme. Additionally the researcher has to take part in writing secondary English textbooks and the TCGs where he would be able to use the research findings to improve the textbooks and the TCGs focusing on the reading teaching and assessment areas. If the researcher knows the area of his work better, he can better manage the trainees and their training and education in future. Furthermore, if the findings of the study are published in research journals and in the daily newspapers, the nation as well as the international ELT community may be benefitted.

1.5 Research Questions

This study tries to explore Bangladeshi secondary English teachers' and students' understanding of English reading skill and the ways the teachers assess reading skill in schools; what their current teaching of English reading skill and assessment

practices are; resources teachers use in teaching reading skill; how the teachers comply with the curriculum guidelines; and what the barriers are in teaching and assessing reading skill properly. The study also tries to find a solution to the problem associated with teaching and assessment of English reading. The study proceeded to find answers to the following questions:

➢ What do the secondary English teachers and the students understand by reading?

➢ What strategies do the teachers employ to develop students' English reading skill?

➢ What resources do the teachers use in teaching and assessing reading skill?

➢ How do the teachers conduct formative and summative assessment of reading in schools?

➢ What are the barriers to teaching and assessing English reading skill in schools?

➢ How can the teaching and assessment of reading in secondary schools be improved?

1.6 Significance of the Study

Reading is important to develop knowledge-base and to make a mentally sound nation. 'Reading is a process of obtaining meaning from written text' (Williams, 1992, p.11). The Teacher's Curriculum Guide (NCTB, 2016) prepared for the teachers teaching English in classes nine and ten asserts that reading is extracting meaning from text, images, signs, charts, diagrams, etc. The Qudrat-e-Khuda Education Commission (MoE, 1974) asserts that English would be taught as a second

language in schools and madrasas so that the students studying at tertiary level can gather knowledge by reading different books and journals in English. No doubt, the MoE (1974) means to develop the English reading skill of the students. The researcher's experiences as a teacher educator for long 22 years show that there is little or no effort on the part of the teachers as well the students themselves to develop the reading comprehension skill in secondary schools although added importance has been attached to reading in the curriculum (NCTB, 2012a).

Ebrahim (2017) claims from his secondary school experiences that teachers do not teach English reading to students following the NCTB (2017, 2016, 2012a, & 2012b) suggested three stages. Therefore, there is an urgent need for exploring the reasons why reading teaching and reading skill assessment is a neglected area in secondary schools. As the current study has been conducted rigorously, the researcher has more understanding of the English teachers' awareness of teaching and assessing English reading skill which would help the researcher better manage the secondary English teachers in B.Ed. course as well as different in-service training sessions. The study also reveals why reading teaching is a neglected area in the secondary schools.

Moreover, the findings of the study are supposed to improve the way of teaching, learning, and assessment of English reading skill in the secondary schools because the curriculum planners would be provided with the findings so that they can take necessary actions to improve the teaching and assessment of reading in schools. Additionally, the researcher has prepared articles with the findings of the study for publishing in the research journals. When they would get published in the international research journals as well as in the local dailies, practising English teachers as well as English language teacher educators, trainers, and ELT researchers

will benefit from those publications. As a result, the English reading teaching and assessment scenario may positively change in the country and elsewhere in the world.

1.7 Research Site

The research sites are two secondary schools in Dhaka city. One of the schools is situated at Sher-e-Banglanagar and the other is at Tejgaon in Dhaka. These two schools have been selected as they are convenient for the researcher to collect data throughout the whole academic year. One of the schools is a reputed government boys' high school and the other is an ordinary non-government girls' high school. Both of the schools are easily accessible and welcoming. When the researcher contacted, the school head teachers readily gave permission to work in their schools and the English teachers, too, agreed to take part in the research project.

The number of students in those schools studying in grades IX and X was 258. The school at Sher-e-Banglanagar had 138 and the other school had 120 students in the aforesaid classes. The number of English teachers who taught in classes IX and X was two in each school. The medium of instruction was Bangla but some teachers used English around 60% of the class time in only English classes. The schools followed national curriculum and the government approved syllabus. Students used to take part in two 45 minutes' sessions in English every day. Between the two English sessions, one was on *English for Today* (EfT) and the other was on *English Grammar and Composition*. The *English for Today* book is popularly called English 1st paper and the *English Grammar and Composition* book is called English 2nd paper. Those two books were written and published by the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB), Ministry of Education (MoE), Bangladesh and were provided to the students free of cost.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

This study selected only four secondary English teachers who taught English in grades IX and X in the two selected schools (see section 1.7). And 10 students were selected from each grade from the mentioned two schools totaling the number of students 40 (10 + 10 + 10 + 10 = 40). This study could not include more schools, madrasas, and English version teaching schools and teachers who taught the same curriculum and used the same or similar English textbooks. Therefore, opinions of the teachers teaching in English version schools as well as the students studying in those schools could not be known. It was not possible on the researcher's part, as a practising teacher educator, to cover wider areas including rural areas and larger number of schools, teachers, and students. However, as the study is qualitative, it is an in-depth and rigorous study. The study gave the researcher real insights into the issues related to proper teaching and assessment of English reading skill at secondary level of education in Bangladesh. Although generalisation is not expected from a qualitative study (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007), hopefully, the findings would benefit the English teachers, the teacher educators, the curriculum planners, the education administrators, and the researchers who are, directly or indirectly, engaged in English language teaching, learning, and assessment.

1.9 Definition of the Key Terms

It seems useful at this stage to clarify the terms and terminology which might not be known to the general readers. That clarification also signals to the readers who are more familiar with the field of study and the specific meanings of those particular terms in context of the study. Terms used in this study which need clarification include reading, teaching, assessment, practices and challenges, Grammar Translation

Method (GTM), Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), and secondary level of education in Bangladesh. The key terms used in this study are explained below:

1.9.1 Reading

Reading is one of the four English language skills and it is a receptive skill. Williams (1992) defines reading as the process whereby one looks at the written or printed text for understanding it; 'understanding' is important in reading; and reading aloud without comprehension does not count as reading. Williams (1992) further adds that understanding is not an 'all or nothing'; learners are active participants who may easily comprehend or struggle for understanding the text. Grabe and Stoller (2002) claim that reading is the ability to draw meaning from a printed text and interpret the meaning suitably. However, reading is much more than is said by Grabe and Stoller (2002) as reading involves a cognitive process as well as many active mental activities based on the purpose of reading. Rivers (1968) has claimed that reading is usually a silent process of deriving meaning from the word combinations in a piece of printed text at a reasonable rapidity. According to Rivers (1968), a reader has to extract three levels of meaning from the text: lexical meaning, structural or grammatical meaning, and socio-cultural meaning. Perfetti and Adlof (2012) describe that reading understanding starts with word identification and goes through different processes and achieves higher level of discovering from and adding meaning to the text.

Kenneth Goodman (1967, cited in Williams, 1992) believes that reading is a 'psycholinguistic guessing game'. According to Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (2012), reading is "the activity or skill of understanding written words" (p. 1445). However, Grellet (1995) continues that reading is a silent

process aiming at finding information and understanding the surface and intended meaning of a printed text. Additionally Grellet (1995) claims that readers try to find information and to comprehend meaning through different ways such as skimming (running one's eyes quickly to get the gist of the text), scanning (reading the text quickly to get a particular piece of information), intensive reading (reading shorter texts for information in details usually for examination or for facing an interview), and extensive reading (reading longer piece of text usually for the reader's own pleasure). Of course, Williams (1992) asserts that reading does not mean understanding only what the writer has tried to mean; reading also includes what the reader brings to the text from their previous experiences. The Teacher's Curriculum Guide (TCG) (NCTB, 2016) on *English for Today* (NCTB, 2012b) for classes nine and ten states:

> By reading skills, we mean silent reading. Reading aloud is part of speaking skills which is mainly practised for teaching pronunciation of difficult words, sounds, stress and intonation. Silent reading is practised for developing students' ability to comprehend a text or a visual object (NCTB, 2016, p. xxv).

However, the curriculum (NCTB, 2012a) also suggests reading aloud for the lower grade students. Regarding teaching of reading, NCTB (2012a, 2016, & 2017), Rogers (2005a, 2005b, & 2005c), and Williams (1992) put emphasis on teaching reading skill to students following the pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading stages. Therefore, reading in this study means silent reading with understanding; and reading instruction means teaching English reading following the three stages mentioned above (NCTB, 2012a, 2016, & 2017; Rogers, 2005a, 2005b, & 2005c; Williams, 1992).

1.9.2 Teaching of Reading and the Three Stages

Teaching includes all the activities which aim at helping students learn or acquire skills, and understand something easily. Teaching, in this research study, means teaching English reading skill to students of secondary level in Bangladesh. According to Yussof, Jamian, Hamzah, and Roslan (2013), a strategy which engages students in contextual meaning making process enhancing the cognitive ability to digest the information contained in the text is very important. According to Williams (1992) and Rogers (2005a, 2005b, & 2005c), the three effective steps to teach English reading are pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading stages or phases. These stages or phases, if followed in teaching reading skill, contribute to the development of understanding of the students (NCTB, 2012a, 2012b, 2016, 1995; Rogers, 2005a, 2005b, & 2005c). In the pre-reading phase, teachers prepare the students for the reading through introducing and arousing interest in the topic; minimising the tension through 'visuals (e.g. diagrams, maps, and photographs), drawing up of lists, setting or answering questions' (Williams, 1992, p. 37). A teacher provides students with reasons for reading by setting some questions to be answered during or after the reading is over and provides some language support, if required (Williams, 1992; NCTB, 2012, 1995; Rogers, 2005a, 2005b, & 2005c). Guthrie and Davis (2003) ask for setting some objectives that emphasise comprehension; giving reasons why the learners will read the text.

According to Williams (1992) and Rogers (2005a, 2005b, & 2005c), in the while-reading stage, students read silently for understanding and try to answer the questions set before the reading text or inserted at different points within the text; teachers provide support to understand the writer's purpose, text structure through clarifying the text, telling meaning while the students are reading and answering.

Comprehension exercises are set usually at the end of the text but in some cases, exercises are inserted in different points of reading; and completing diagrams, maps, making lists, matching, writing synonyms and antonyms are some of the while-reading activities (Williams, 1992; NCTB, 2012a, 1995; Rogers, 2005a, 2005b, & 2005c).

On the other hand, in the post-reading phase, teachers help learners consolidate or reflect on the text that has been read; relate the text to learners' own knowledge and experiences; students express their feelings if they like the text or not; why they like or why do not; the knowledge provided in the text is useful or not; think how the knowledge learnt can be used in solving real-life problems. A teacher's reflection and student motivation can be included in this satge and in other stages of teaching English reading skill (Williams, 1992; NCTB, 2012, 1995; Rogers, 2005a, 2005b, & 2005c).

The National Curriculum (NCTB, 1995 & 2012a), and the TCG (NCTB, 2016) asked English teachers to follow the pre-reading, while-reading, and post reading phases in developing students' English reading skill. In the current study English reading skill teaching and assessment was looked at through the 3-stages lens of Williams (1992), Rogers (2005a, 2005b, & 2005c) and the National Curriculum (NCTB, 2012a, 2016, & 1995) and the English reading assessment is looked through the lens of the Guidelines for Question Setters and the Markers for English (Appendix 10) and the National Curriculum (NCTB, 2012a & 1995).

1.9.3 Assessment

Johnston and Costello (2005) define assessment, with reference to Black and William (1998a) and Johnston (1993), as feedback provided by teachers on students' literate

behaviours just as much as is grading students' work; classifying students as handicapped or above or below grade level; and identifying the areas of improvement. Johnston and Costello (2005, p. 147) further state that "Testing is a subset of assessment practices in which children's literate behavior is elicited in more controlled conditions" and assessment is a set of social practices where different tools are used in testing for various purposes (Johnston & Costello 2005). Educational assessment may include the process of documenting an individual's or a group's achieved skills, knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs. This study considers assessment in terms of four English language skills in general, and reading skill assessment in particular. Assessment in this study includes formative assessment or assessment for learning (AfL); summative assessment or assessment of learning (AoL) in schools; and continuous assessment (CA) that teachers perform in the educational institutions during teaching and learning. For assessment to be formative or AfL, Taras (2005) claims, it requires feedback which indicates the existence of a gap between the work of a student being assessed and the set standard. Like AfL, CA also is associated with feedback that helps students improve. And in most cases, summative assessment does not have feedback (Taras, 2005).

Assessment in this study means assessment of reading skill by employing the strategies as suggested by NCTB (2018) in the Guidelines for Question Setters and Markers for English (Appendix 10), and in the National Curriculum (NCTB, 2012a & 1995). It is said in the Guidelines for Question Setters and Markers for English (NCTB, 2018) that the teachers would use MCQs, short essay type questions, true/false, matching, gap-filling with or without clues, Cloze test with/without clues, information transfer, substitution table, gap-filling with right forms of verbs, changing sentences, and rearranging in assessing students' English reading skill.

1.9.4 Practices and Challenges

Practices refer to the ways English teachers teach and assess English reading skill in schools. The methods or approaches and techniques teachers employ to teach and assess English reading skill are practices in this study. In other words, what the teachers do in teaching and assessing English reading skill are the practices.

Challenges in the study are the barriers that prohibit the proper teaching and assessment of English reading skill at the secondary level of education in Bangladesh. In other words, something that makes teaching and assessment of English reading difficult to accomplish, is considered as a challenge.

1.9.5 Grammar Translation Method (GTM)

The Grammar Translation Method (GTM) is considered the oldest method used in language teaching throughout the world. It is originated in Germany more than 200 years ago and till today this method dominates the dominion of language teaching (Andres and Carvajal, 2013). Prastyo (2015) claims that achieving accuracy and fluency are the target of learning English which means that a teacher should aim at teaching communicative as well as linguistic competences. GTM helps learners achieve the linguistic competence in the target language. Traditionally, GTM entails teachers reading out the target language text to students and translating it into the students' mother language. GTM method of teaching instigates teachers to dominate the class through doing almost all the activities even those which are set for students' language practices. As a result, learners remain almost passive in the classroom if a teacher uses GTM in teaching. Grammatical rules and accuracy of the target language are more valued than fluency in this method; that is, *form* is more important than *meaning* in

GTM, which is quite opposite to Littlewood's meaning focused CLT (Littlewood, 1988).

1.9.6 Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach comes into being during the beginning of 1970's in the face of supposed failure of the Audio-lingual, the GTM, and other methods and approaches (Hiep, 2005). CLT is an approach to teaching of an additional language. CLT advocates for developing fluency or communicative competence of the learners. *Meaning* of the language is preferred in CLT (Littlewood, 1988) although either, fluency and accuracy, are the ultimate target of a language learning programme (Prastyo, 2015). This approach puts emphasis on the interactions or practices as a way of language learning. Littlewood (2013) claims that when someone learns a language, they learn the functions of the language, not the structure of it. As function is more important in language learning, teachers are advised to engage students to practise language expressing functions.

Moreover, as language is a skill-based subject, Littlewood (2013) advises teachers to engage learners in practising four language skills without taking explicit corrective measures (Littlewood, 2013). Bangladesh secondary English curriculum attaches importance to the CLT approach for developing four language skills. NCTB (2012, p. 35) asserts that 'learning by doing' should be way of teaching and learning and 'grammar is not to be taught explicitly'. Regarding reading skill, the National Curriculum (NCTB, 2012a, p. 81) asserts that "Students' ability to read text and authentic materials of appropriate level for comprehension and higher order thinking will be assessed". The characteristic features of CLT are students' added engagement in the language practices; and the teachers play the role of facilitators. Teachers will create

language practice opportunities for the learners and the students would learn the language through continuous practices. CLT focuses more on the *meaning* than the *form* of the target language.

1.9.7 Secondary Level

Secondary level of education in Bangladesh ranges from class (grade) six to twelve, but the National Education Policy (NEP) 2010 and the latest National Curriculum developed in 2012 (NCTB, 2012a) restructure primary and secondary education. The NEP 2010 and the National Curriculum (NCTB, 2012a) declare that primary education would be up to class eight and the secondary education would be from class nine to twelve (NEP 2010; NCTB, 2012a). The process of the implementation of the new structure of education has started but it is not sure when the implementation process would be completed or if it would be implemented at all or not. Although almost all the people of Bangladesh consider classes from six to twelve as secondary level, in this study, only classes nine and ten are considered as secondary level of education

1.10 Organisation of the Dissertation

The dissertation comprises of six chapters. The chapters include Chapter One: Introduction; Chapter Two: Literature Review; Chapter Three: Research Methodology; Chapter Four: Analysis of Data; Chapter Five: Summary and Discussion of the Findings; and Chapter Six: Implications and Conclusion.

1.11 Conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher sets the background of the study; states the significance and the purpose of the study; describes the site and the participants; clarifies the terms

used in the research; and tells the readers about the organisation of the study. Moreover, the researcher clearly states the research questions in this chapter. Research reports locally as well as globally reveal that teachers' understanding of English reading skill is poor (Athiemoolam & Kibul, 2012; Podder, 2012; Hollenbeck et al., 2013; Ebrahim, 2017; Fletcher, Parkhill, & Greenwood, 2009). Therefore, it is important to learn what Bangladesh secondary English teachers understand by reading skill; what strategies they employ to help students to improve their English reading skill; what resources they use in teaching and assessing English reading skill; what the barriers are and how the teaching and assessment of reading situation can be improved in the secondary schools of Bangladesh.

Although generalisation is not expected from a qualitative study (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007), the findings might be of great use to the practising English teachers of all levels in the country; the English language teacher educators; the curriculum planners; the textbook writers; the education administrators; and to the general readers.

At this stage of reporting, the researcher believes that it would be reasonable to give the readers an idea of the structure of the dissertation and therefore it has been shown in section 1.10 above. With the development of the dissertation, the chapters mentioned in section 1.10 would be presented one by one. The next chapter deals with the literature review.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the review of literature related to the research. Reviewing related literature in pursuing a research study is an established intellectual culture all over the world. This literature review is necessary to find the gaps in the field of study or to learn what has been done so far and what more need to be explored. Through the review of literature, a researcher makes a strong base for their research and can better plan the proposed study minimising or avoiding the weaknesses in the planning and choosing the methods for conducting the proposed study. Creswell (2008, p. 89) claims "Reading the literature also helps the researcher to learn how other educators compose their research studies and it also helps find the useful examples and models in the literature for a researcher's own research." If a researcher can make their knowledge base stronger in and around the field of study, it is expected that their research would be more pin pointed and they can delve deep into the research problem. For the current study, some books, journal articles, newspaper articles and reports, curriculum documents, the *English for Today* (NCTB, 2012b) and the *English Grammar and Composition* (NCTB, 2016) books; tests used in school examinations (Appendix 9); theses and dissertations; and websites which are related to the research problem have been reviewed.

However, the review has been done under some heads such as meaning of reading (2.2); types of reading (2.3); scanning and skimming (2.3.1); intensive reading (2.3.2); extensive reading (2.3.3); purposes of reading (2.4); reading policy guidelines in

Bangladesh (2.5); reading teaching materials (2.6); English reading teaching approaches (2.7); fluency versus comprehension in reading (2.8); English reading teaching situation in Bangladesh (2.9); English reading teaching and learning practices in other countries (2.10); concept of assessment and testing (2.11); purposes and types of assessment (2.11.1); English reading skill assessment strategies (2.11.2); English reading skill assessment practices in Bangladesh (2.11.3); English reading skill testing items (2.11.4); teacher training on teaching and assessment (2.11.5); lens used to look at reading (2.12); and conclusion (2.13). Review of literature, as stated above, has been presented below:

2.2 Meaning of Reading

Reading has been defined in several ways by different linguists. Chowdhury and Karim (2014, p. 48) define reading as "an interactive process in which a reader's prior knowledge of the subject and purpose for reading operate to influence what is learned from text". Spratt, Pulverness, and Williams (2011, p. 31) assert, "Reading involves making sense of written text. To do this we need to understand the language of the text at word level, sentence level or whole-text level". Spratt et al. (2011) further claim that readers need to connect the message of the text to the reader's knowledge of the world. Robinson and Muskopf (1964) claim that reading is word recognition, understanding the meaning of the text, and the fluency in reading.

Ur (2011) defines reading as "reading and understanding" (p. 138); and according to him, being able to read words and not understanding what the text means is not reading at all; it is mere translation of the written symbols into corresponding sounds. Ko (2013) maintains that although reading starts with word recognition and word-level meaning, the ultimate goal of reading is discovering the meaning contained in

the text as well as adding meaning to it. Some of the sub-skills of reading Spratt et al. (2011, p. 31) identified include "scanning (reading for specific information), skimming (reading for the gist), reading for details (intensive reading); reading for inferring meaning from context; predicting, and understanding text structure". Some educators believe that reading is a loud process where a reader reads out a piece of text fluently with better pronunciation but NCTB (2016) has asserted that reading aloud is much associated with speaking skill development. Reading in the secondary English curriculum of Bangladesh indicates reading silently with understanding (NCTB, 2012a, 1995).

Reading is a silent process and it aims at understanding the text although the understanding level of different readers might be different. A reader comprehends when a new idea is put in the context of what is already known (Pearson & Johnson, 1978). The following excerpt from Larsen-Freeman (2004, p. 131) also speaks that reading aims at comprehension:

> Just as oral communication is seen to take place through negotiation between speaker and listener, so too is meaning thought to be derived from the written word through an interaction between the reader and the writer. The writer is not present to receive immediate feedback from the reader, of course, but the reader tries to understand the writer's intentions and the writer writes with the reader's perspective in mind. Meaning does not, therefore, reside exclusively in the text, but rather arises through negotiation between the reader and the writer (Larsen-Freeman, 2004, p. 131).

The stated negotiations are developed through practices. That is why students need to be engaged in reading practices and assessment. McLaughlin (1987) claims with reference to some research (Hasher and Zacks, 1979; Ellis, 1997) that some learners process a target language relatively in a short period of time while others take longer time based on their language aptitude and cognitive ability. However, they claim that, through continuous practices, language learning becomes so automatic and faster that

it takes little time to process the target language through reducing mistakes and errors. Gurrey (1953) believes that a reader must master some skills in gasping the gist of the text, deducing ideas and finding facts from the text.

Ellis (1997) claims that language learning is nothing but habit formation through repeated practices; and repeated practices means responding to stimulus. Ellis (1997, p. 31) asserts, "A habit is stimulus-response connection". Reading is referred to as a complex cognitive process and one's reading comprehension starts with the word recognition (Pearson & Johnson, 1978). As reading is a skill, learners must read the pieces of text and answer different types of questions including analytical questions in order to enhance the understanding skill. Ur (2011) claims that when the context is not known, a reader decodes the word-level meaning; and when the context is known, the reader negotiates the meaning based on contexts. Ur (2011) further claims that successful reading happens when a reader assigns meaning to a piece of text based on their previous knowledge or experiences.

Some learners are faster in comprehending the text and some are slow or struggling. However, Guthrie and Davis (2003) claim that the struggling readers or the low achievers can improve their reading comprehension skill if the educators change the reading instruction strategy; scaffold when and if necessary; guide students in reading practices with feedback; motivate the students for intensive and extensive reading; connect the reading text to students' real-life experiences; and encourage collaboration as students learn more when interact with peers.

At this stage of reporting, it seems logical to make the types of reading clear to the readers. Therefore the following section discusses the types of reading.

2.3 Types of Reading

Reading is mainly of two types – reading aloud and silent reading. Usually, reading means silent reading which aims at understanding the meaning of the text. Silent reading can be of two types: intensive reading, and extensive reading. The objective of intensive reading is to achieve full understanding of the contents and the linguistic features which include "the logical argument; the rhetorical arrangement or pattern of the text; its symbolic, emotional and social overtones; the attitudes and purposes of the author; and the linguistic means that he employs to achieve his ends" (BIDE, 1985, p. 26). Survey reading, skimming, and scanning are sub-skills of extensive reading and wide regular reading consolidates the readers' comprehension. Whatever the types of reading are, the main target of reading is understanding the printed text, charts, diagrams, images, flow chart, etc. (NCTB, 1995, 2012, 2016) or "to do with receiving and decoding information" (Watkins, 2007, p. 57). Based on the purposes of reading, it has been divided into the following kinds:

```
                          Reading
             ┌───────────────┴───────────────┐
        Silent Reading                   Reading Aloud
   ┌────────┬────────┬─────────────┐
Scanning  Skimming  Intensive     Extensive
                    Reading       Reading
```
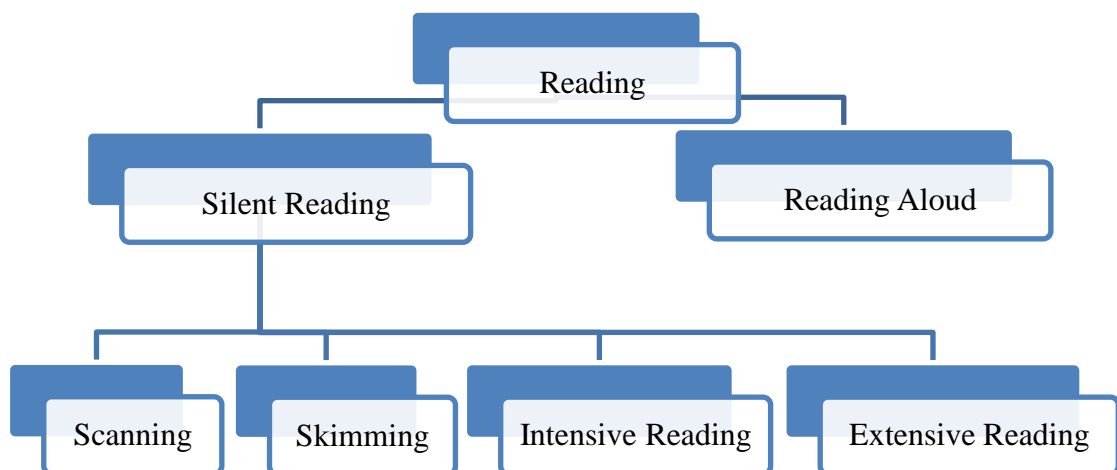
It has already been cited in in section 1.9.1 that reading is a silent process with understanding (NCTB, 2016) and reading without understanding is not considered as

reading at all. However, when someone talks about reading aloud, actually they talk about recitation which is very much related to speaking practices (NCTB, 2016); and BIDE (1985) asserts that reading aloud is primarily associated with oral skill practice and teachers usually engage students in reading aloud in order to correct their pronunciation in speech. Gurrey (1953, p.98), too, claims that "In early years, reading aloud is useful for giving practice in pronunciation" but the final goal of reading is comprehension. However, BIDE (1985) urges teachers to go for silent reading gradually leaving behind reading aloud. Although some younger readers read aloud when they start to learn reading, most of the reading throughout their lives takes place silently. The aforesaid types of reading have been described in the following sub-sections.

2.3.1 Scanning and Skimming

Watkins (2007) claims that scanning is a type of reading where a reader tries to find the specific information from a piece of text and the reader in scanning does not read line by line minutely. They only look for the specific information with higher speed of reading. Fauzi (2018) asserts that scanning helps a reader find specific information from a piece of text and improves the speed of reading. Fauzi (2018) further asserts that in scanning, the readers do not have to understand the theme of the text, they read the text superficially and try to find the particular pieces of information they are looking for.

Skimming or the gist reading, on the other hand, is a kind of silent reading where the reader reads the text in order to get the gist or the theme of the text (Watkins, 2007; Fauzi, 2018). Fauzi (2018) asserts that in skimming, a reader has to try to understand almost every word in order to get the main idea of the text. In skimming, the readers

have to read in detail so that the theme of the text can be understood properly. Skimming, like scanning, improves the speed of reading, claims Fauzi (2018). Usually students are engaged in intensive reading as most of them do not want to miss answering any questions from their textbooks. The following sub-section (2.3.2) discusses what intensive reading is and what benefits students achieve through intensive reading.

2.3.2 Intensive Reading

Rivers and Temperley (1978), Watkins (2007), and Harmer (2001) claim that intensive reading is a serious type of reading in which a reader does not want to miss out anything from the text. If anyone reads to face an examination or any kinds of tests including oral tests, they read intensively so that the interviewers cannot restrain them; in other words, they read so minutely that they can answer all or most of the questions. Miftah (2013) claims with reference to Bamford and Day (2000) and Harmer (2001) that the learners' comprehension improves if the pre-, whilst-, and post-reading activities can be implemented properly. Miftah (2013) further claims that, intensive and extensive reading should go together in order to improve the comprehension and reading fluency of learners. "Intensive and extensive reading go together to help the readers comprehend the text" (Miftah, 2013, p. 23). Harmer (2001) asks the teachers to organise reading, create interest, provide prompts, observe, and to provide feedback during reading teaching in the classroom. Teachers need to enable the students to predict what is going to happen next as inference in reading is a useful reading sub-skill (Harmer, 2001).

Alongside intensive reading, students should be encouraged to engage in extensive reading for achieving better comprehension skill in reading. The following sub-section (2.3.3) deals with extensive reading.

2.3.3 Extensive Reading

Extensive reading or recreational reading or independent reading or reading for pleasure or Krashen's (2004) free voluntary reading never aims at answering any pre-set questions although this kind of reading improves the level of comprehension of the readers (Merga & Moon, 2016). According to Guthrie and Wigfield (2000), regular recreational reading is strongly associated with success in reading. Bamberger (1975b) also claims that a country's social and economic progress largely depends on the people's access to the knowledge conveyed by the printed texts. In order to achieve the benefits of reading, almost all the member countries of UNESCO launched programmes based on the main slogan of the year 1972 'Promotion of the reading habit' declaring 1972 as the International Book Year. According to Berns, Blaine, Pritula, and Pye (2013, cited in Merga and Moon, 2016), reading novels stimulates a part of the reader's brain which is responsible for comprehension.

However in extensive reading, as cited earlier in this section, the reader does not have any direct target, but they acquire pleasure through extensive reading and gather knowledge as by-product. Reading newspapers, books of interest, journals, browsing the Internet, and so on are examples of extensive reading as we read them for pleasure. Regular extensive reading help learners make aware of the structures of the language, build vocabulary, and help promote confidence of the readers in the target language (BBC, 2018).

It has been cited earlier in section 2.2 that reading comprehension is the ability to extract meaning from the text and the context or to understand the text between and/or beyond the lines. Bangladesh secondary curriculum (NCTB, 2012a) puts emphasis on the comprehension of the text. But the progress in comprehension of the readers depends on some factors such as learners' physical and mental health, better visual condition, intelligence, experiences, knowledge and skills in the language, interest in reading, purpose of reading, and the environment learners live in (Shermila, 1999). Shermila's study (1999) with the ninth grade students also reveals that 72% students just read the lines, 20% read between the lines, and only 8% read beyond the lines where the target is going between and beyond the lines. Kahn (1974) advocates for extensive reading of literature as reading literature humanise the readers alongside providing knowledge and improving comprehension skill.

Any kinds of reading should have purposes since the purposes help a reader to concentrate on the reading text (NCTB, 2012a). The following section deals with the purposes of reading.

2.4 Purposes of Reading

Fisher, Frey, and Hattie (2016) claim that surface meaning of text is essential for the beginners but the later target of reading is comprehension. Islam (2014) claims that some people read for acquiring knowledge; some others read just for pleasure- to provide food and fuel to their minds and souls. Proficiency in reading is considered a precondition to effective functioning in the society, enhancing individuals' earning and over-all quality of life (Islam, 2014; Grabe & Stoller, 2011). English is not only the most used and the most popular language of the world, but also a language of

livelihood. Most of the students in schools, colleges, and universities in Bangladesh read English to pass the internal and the public examinations.

Rivers and Temperley (1978) claim that usually each reader's aim of reading is to extract specific and interesting pieces of information although they term this kind of purpose as inane as the main purpose of reading is understanding the themes of the pieces of texts; comprehending the intension of the author; and relating the acquired knowledge to real life. The researcher's long experiences in the field of education and teacher training show that most of the school, college, and university-going students read English to pass the examination and those who pass the educational institutions, read English to fare well in the recruitment tests, not for comprehension or for pleasure. Additionally, some other aspiring students read English to get a higher score in IELTS needed for studying at the high ranking universities of the world. Again there are some who read in order to keep themselves updated which help them handle their jobs and the clientele smoothly and thus to make their everyday life better.

Moreover, some have to read files to take decision. Baker (2003) claims that reading is no more only decoding the meaning of a piece of text; it is about knowing the world. A reader has to discover the meaning in the text through removing many layers and this uncovering best happens when students discuss the possible meaning of the text in pairs and groups. It happens because different students bring different meaning to text and all of them may be right. The following quotation can make the purpose of reading clear to the readers:

> To discover the meaning of a text, you need to un-cover various layers of meaning --- these layers can change their meaning overtime --- and from one place to another --- and so change the meaning of the text for new audiences ---. A written or visual text has layers of meaning, such as the time in which it was produced, the medium available for its production and the attitudes of its

audiences over time and place (Crump, Durand, Hooke, & Kelliher, 2002 as cited in Considine et al., 2009).

Different readers have different purposes of reading such as extracting the surface meaning (Fisher et al., 2016); better functioning in the society (Islam, 2014; Grabe & Stoller, 2011); and extracting specific and interesting pieces information (Rivers & Temperley, 1978). However, reading is considered no more making meaning only, it is also attributing meaning to the text (Baker, 2003). Considine et al. (2009) assert that meaning is best constructed when readers discuss in pairs and groups; and accoding to Considine et al. (2009) the meaning once made may change over time and place.

At this stage of reporting, the readers should be made aware of the reading policy in Bangladesh so that they can relate the policy to the current practices. In the following section, the researcher discusses the existing reading policy guidelines in Bangladesh.

2.5 Reading Policy Guidelines in Bangladesh

Although there were ups and downs in the area of English language teaching and learning in Bangladesh, English language has always enjoyed high status in the society. The first Education Commission of Bangladesh (1974) which is known as Qudrat-e-Khuda Education Commission suggests that English, for the historical reasons and for the sake of reality, must be learnt as a second compulsory language. Other education commission reports and the last two curriculum reports published in 1995 and 2012 respectively put emphasis on the teaching and learning of English in Bangladesh. Not only at present time, but also about hundred years ago, English language was considered important. West (n.d., p. 83) claimed, "Under existing condition a good knowledge of English is a matter of bread and butter. Moreover,

English is rapidly becoming the much needed *lingua franca* of educated India." However, Michael West (1897 – 1957) was worried about the poor reading skill of the school children.

Reading is an active and interactive process through which meaning of the text is decoded through negotiations with self and the writers (Chaudhury and Karim, 2014). Fluency in reading with understanding is the last target for reading skill practices (Applegate et al., 2009). A person with significant decoding problems faces severe difficulty in occupation needing rigorous reading with adequate fluency. After the liberation of Bangladesh in 1971, added importance has been attached to the learning of English language although English has not enjoyed equal status all through (see section 1.1 for more details).

Acquiring English communication skill is more emphasised in the curricula (NCTB, 1995 & 2012a). In the consecutive two curricula, English has been declared as a skill-based subject not as a knowledge-based or a content-based subject. In skill-focused subjects, skills practices are more important than the contents although skills are practised based on the contents. As listening, speaking, reading, and writing are skills; they need to be equally and repeatedly practised to be able to communicate using those skills. So far as English reading skill is concerned, the national curriculum (NCTB, 2012a) puts emphasis on understanding the text through silent reading. It expects that learners would learn to scan and skim; and practise inferring meaning from the text and the context (NCTB, 2012a). Although silent reading is suggested in the curriculum for the secondary students, reading aloud is also suggested for the lower secondary students in order to improve their English pronunciation, stress, and intonation.

The National Curriculum (NCTB, 2012a) has asked the teachers to engage students from classes six to eight in reading aloud so that they are able to "read aloud texts with proper pronunciation, stress and intonation" (NCTB, 2012a, p. 37). Tost (2013) also claims from a study in Spain with 20 adult English school students that collaborative reading aloud and peer support in improving pronunciation is effective. As it has been cited earlier in the section 2.3 of this chapter that, reading aloud is primarily associated with oral skill development (NCTB, 2012a, 2016 & BIDE, 1985), silent reading with understanding is suggested for the secondary level learners (NCTB, 2012a).

In order to achieve the set target, the NCTB has prepared materials to be used in teaching and assessment of reading and other language skills in schools. The following section discusses the reading teaching materials used by the teachers in schools.

2.6 Reading Teaching Materials

The NCTB prepared a book named *English for Today* (NCTB, 2012b) in which there are opportunities for developing students' English reading skill. Analysis of the lessons of the said book reveals that there are 80 reading practice opportunities and another book on grammar and composition called the *English Grammar and Composition* (NCTB, 2016) contains 106 reading opportunities. In the first case, the lessons followed the three stages of teaching reading skill (NCTB, 2012b; Williams, 1992) although the lessons in the *English Grammar and Composition* (NCTB, 2016) does not strictly follow the three stages of teaching reading as suggested in the curriculum (NCTB, 2012a, 2016; Williams, 1992). Haque (2016) reports from a mixed method research with 10 EFL teachers and 511 students studying at the HSC

level that seven out of 10 teachers are heavily dependent on commercially produced guidebooks and the Test Papers; and only three are found to use the *English for Today* book in teaching English but those three teachers do not utilise the textbook throughout the whole lesson; they use the textbook only for a short period of time in the whole lesson. Babu, Ashrafuzzaman, Begum, and Hossain (2014) also report from their study with 20 respondents including students, teachers, and the parents of the student participants of the two rural secondary schools that the students depend on the commercially prepared guidebooks for learning English. Similar scenario is reported by Chung (2004) in China where 80% of the EFL teachers and learners are found to use materials which are not approved by the Ministry of Education, China.

Billah (2014) claims that textbooks are the only sources and resources for teachers to teach English reading in schools and those textbooks have clearly identified learning outcomes to achieve at the end of a lesson. Additionally, the textbooks also have some steps for teachers to follow in teaching. And the textbooks have a balanced number of lessons where learners have opportunities to practise all the four skills of English language including reading. Gurrey (1953) asserts that conventional reading skill development courses always do not provide training to the learners that help develop students' reading ability. According to Gurrey (1953), although some students do not need special training to develop reading skill, most of them need training especially in a country where reading is not a widespread habit.

Although English teachers are allowed to use authentic texts alongside the textbook lessons, a small number of teachers are observed to follow only the textbook lessons and the rest of them follow guidebooks containing the answers of all the exercises of the lessons. Besides, the teachers are observed to follow the pedagogy of answers, that is, teachers answer the questions which are meant to be answered by students.

Allwright (1990) and Watkins (2007) allege that there should be various types of text for students' reading in the classrooms instead of a fixed textbook although O' Neil (1990) supports textbooks for methodical practices of English reading skill.

Watkins (2007) claims that teachers should "sometimes use texts with learners which are not specifically designed for teaching purposes" (p. 57) for exposing students to authentic English. Kuzborska (2011) also claims that collecting or preparing reading materials to use in teaching improves the creativity, capacity, and professionalism of teachers but only finding or preparing and using resources is not all; teachers have to create appropriate activities to be practised in the classroom. The National Curriculum (2012a) also keeps provision for using authentic texts in the classroom teaching and learning other than those in the *English for Today* book. The British Council, India (2017, p. 31) reports the voice of a secondary English teacher named Dena from Bengaluru, "Following a textbook blindly, at least I wouldn't recommend it. Supplement it with other activities and bring in extra resources that you can use to make the lesson more interesting".

However, Ebrahim (2017) alleges that English teachers do not use the NCTB provided textbooks, instead they use the commercially produced materials in the classroom teaching; and Rahman (2018) reports from a qualitative study in three rural secondary schools in Bangladesh where three secondary English teachers and 30 students from classes nine and ten participated that teachers were found uninterested in teaching English and utilising the NCTB-produced resources. Billah (2014) claims that making reading materials easily available is important for developing learners' English reading skill. According to Ur (2011), simplified texts are useful to make the readers habituated in English reading. Lipp and Helfrich (2016) also assert that teachers should start with easy books where the learners do not have to employ much

efforts for understanding since starting with easier books had a positive effects on reading fluency and reading comprehension for the beginning readers. The similar need for using easier materials at the start of reading teaching was felt by researchers in the USA about 50 years ago.

For example, Robinson and Muskopf (1964, p. 80) asked the teachers to "use materials which students can manage without becoming frustrated". However, the ultimate goal is to expose learners to authentic text since students need to use the same level of texts as is used by the native learners of English. Chaudhury and Karim (2014) suggest in a quantitative study with 20 EFL teachers, and 120 students from one public and seven private universities of Bangladesh studying different subjects having English foundation courses that, for helping learners to achieve better comprehension skill, the teachers should use authentic texts from the Internet, international newspapers, and magazines in teaching and testing reading skill of students.

Park (2017) reports from a two-group experimental study with 72 Korean secondary students that, the students receiving intervention on extensive reading achieved better comprehension skill in reading than those who received intervention on intensive reading. However, Park (2017) claims that the introduction of extensive reading along with intensive reading develops reading fluency and comprehension properly. Similar voice is heard from Pearson and Johnson (1978) that wide reading paves the way for reading comprehension of the readers. Merga and Moon (2016) and Harmer (2001) claim that teachers have a great influencing power that can engage students in recreational reading. And to be successful in reading, claims Harmer (2001), teachers should start with text that students understand easily and then they should go for the challenging texts gradually. However, Chaudhury and Karim (2014) advise that

students should be given the responsibility to read instead of teachers' feeding style of teaching. The following section discusses the reading teaching approaches in details.

2.7 Reading Teaching Approaches

Teaching strategies have effect on the achievement of language skills. Research findings prove that methodical classroom reading instruction practices help enhance students' comprehension (Goldman, Snow, & Vaughn, 2016; Robinson & Muskopf, 1964). Goldman et al. (2016) have conducted a study on three reading skill enhancement projects for the adolescent and have come to a decision that, for effective teaching of reading comprehension, teachers need to purposefully engage students in reading. They claim that through the engagement in reading, students develop cognitive skill through the use of their prior knowledge. Cook (1996) and Silberstein (1994) claim that reading is a cognitive process and that process is not linear in second or foreign language as in mother tongue; here the reader has to interact with the text in order to create meaning out of the text. According to Cook (1996), like speaking, reading happens in context and the meaning of the text is not found in the sentences themselves, meaning is made based on the previous knowledge of the reader and based on the context.

Biddulph (2002) claims that reading is an interactive process in which a reader deeply engages with a piece of text and forms their own meaning of what the writer has written based on the reader's background knowledge. On the other hand, teachers have to employ some reading teaching strategies to help students comprehend. So far as teaching a language skill is concerned, the teachers' beliefs and attitudes about language learning and teaching influence on what the teachers do in the classrooms and what they want their learners to do (Nunan, 1991). As the purpose of a language

is communication, readers have to try to understand what the writer has tried to communicate. William Littlewood puts emphasis on the communicative functions of a language:

> We can therefore combine the newer functional view of language with a traditional structural view in order to achieve a more complete communicative perspective. This enables us to give a fuller account of what students have to learn in order to use language as a means of communication (Littlewood, 1988, p. x).

In order to teach reading skill to students, teachers' responsibilities are held high. If the reading teaching and the teachers themselves are good and create reading-supportive environment, learners are expected to form life-long reading habit and can achieve better reading skill gradually (Baker, 2003). Baker (2003) additionally claims that intrinsic, extrinsic, and social motivation works behind students' reading.

In order to help the learners to develop English reading skill, teachers must follow the three stages in teaching of reading as suggested by Williams (1992), the NCTB (2012a, 2012b & 2016), and Rogers (2005a, 2005b, & 2005c). Pelincsar and Brown (1994) and Pressley et al. (1995) have also claimed that reading comprehension is a complex skill which learners can achieve through the teachers' exploitation of the suggested activities of the pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading stages.

In the pre-reading stage, teachers activate the students for the reading. In this stage, teachers usually engage students in talking about a picture and ask them to imagine from the picture what might be the text about. Teachers also may engage students in asking and answering questions in pairs so that the students can infer what is there in the text and become interested in reading the text (Williams, 1992) and students predict based on their "background knowledge, what readers know from life-

experiences or from reading other texts (Moreillon, 2007, p. 14). And this background knowledge, claims Moreillon (2007), supports the readers in comprehension.

In the while-reading stage, the students read and make three types of connections: the text-to-self, text-to-text, text-to-world; and this kind of connections help the reader better comprehend the text (Williams, 1992; Moreillon, 2007).

In the post-reading stage, the readers write answers; checks answers individually and/or in pairs; teachers elicit answers and provide feedback, if necessary; help students internalise the text; personalise the theme(s) of the text (Moreillon, 2007; Williams, 1992). As reading is one of the four basic skills of English language, learners have to practise reading as per the teachers' instruction continuously in order to achieve better comprehension skill in reading gradually. Azizifar, Roshani, Gowhary, and Jamalinesari (2015) conducted a quantitative pre-test, post-test design study with 60 tenth-grade in two equal groups Iranian students and found that pre-reading activities had a positive impact on students' reading comprehension.

In order to comprehend text better, vocabulary knowledge of the readers has been attached added importance and Linan-Thompson et al. (2003) have claimed that readers with limited vocabulary face difficulty with reading comprehension. In that case, Linan-Thomson et al. (2003) and Rogers (2005a, 2005b, & 2005c) suggest the teachers to pre-teach the new vocabulary so that the learners find it easier to comprehend the text. Herrera, Perez, and Escamilla (2010, p. 165) assert that "Children may read well and pronounce perfectly, but if they do not understand what they have read, they have gained nothing".

Bangladesh secondary English curriculum and English textbooks adopted CLT approach in teaching and learning English. CLT approach engages the learners in

reading activities as reading is a skill and since no skill can be achieved without continuous practices. Bangladesh secondary curricula (NCTB, 2012a &1995) suggest three stages in teaching English reading skill to students. The first stage is pre-reading stage where the learners have to look at an image and guess what it is about; ask and answer questions about the image and the story hidden in it; predict the theme just after looking at the title; and so on. Williams (1992) states that at the pre-reading stage, the teacher usually has to introduce and arouse interest of students in the topic; has to provide the readers with reasons for reading the text; and has to support with some language matters if required. By doing these activities, the readers try to infer what the text is about. Sometimes, their guesses are correct, sometimes close to the theme(s) of the text, and sometimes their guesses are far from the original theme. It does not really matter whether the predictions are right or wrong; but the good thing is the readers are actively thinking.

Just before the students begin reading, they are provided with some questions which they are expected to answer from their reading. These questions are the reasons why students will read the text. The second stage in teaching reading is called while-reading stage. According to Williams (1992), in this stage, students start reading the text; try to understand word level meaning and sentence level meaning; theme of the text; try to relate the reading with real life; try to answer the questions set earlier, and so on. The teacher at this stage monitors the class and provides supports to the readers if and when necessary. The students read the text and decode meaning from the text and the context.

As mentioned earlier in this section that the third stage of teaching reading is called the post-reading stage. At this stage, teachers check the students' understanding, and provide feedback. Williams (1992) asserts that what has been read is consolidated at

this stage; the reading is related to the learners' knowledge, experiences, interests, and views. Moreover, post-reading may also include reactions to the text – whether they liked or disliked; the text was useful or not; and overall reaction to the while-reading work.

There is evidence that students cannot acquire the reading comprehension skill due to teachers' faulty teaching style and thus national expectations are ruined (Slater & Horstman, 2002). The National Curriculum (NCTB, 2012a) expects that if the teachers teach English reading skill following the three stages (NCTB, 2016, 2012a, & 2012b; Rogers, 2005a, 2005b, & 2005c; Pressley et al., 1995; Pelincsar & Brown, 1994; & Williams, 1992), the Bangladeshi secondary students' reading skill will improve gradually.

Although comprehension is considered the main target in reading (NCTB, 2016 & 2012a; Grabe & Stoller, 2002; Williams, 1992; & Rivers, 1968), fluency is also equally important (Lipka, 2017; Applegate et al., 2009). The relationship and the importance of fluency is presented below:

2.8 Fluency versus Comprehension in Reading

Applegate et al. (2009) investigate if fluency and comprehension is interrelated in reading or not. They selected 171 children as respondents ranging from grade two to ten living in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware in the USA. 60 of the total participants were males. The respondents were selected based on the teachers' identification as strong readers and they were tested using the Critical Reading Inventory-2 (CRI-2) Reading Fluency Rubric. Only those, who scored 16 or higher, were taken for the study as respondents. The participants were from different ethnic groups and they had different types of schooling. Each participant was tested at their

level on two narrative passages from the CRI-2. Each passage was followed by a series of 10 open-ended questions. Though the respondents were categorised as strong readers, one-third of the respondents were found to be struggling with comprehension (Applegate et al., 2009).

The researchers have found in their study that fluency in reading can never ensure comprehension although they believe that fluency and comprehension is interwoven. The dynamics of fluency and comprehension do not seem to be so easy but one thing is convincing that speed without understanding is not something to be valued in reading (Applegate et al. 2009) and Herrera et al. (2010) also asserts that fluency without comprehension is nothing. The researchers are the followers of behaviourist theorists because they believe that the earlier the problems with reading are diagnosed, the better the curative measures can be taken. That is, they believe that students' reading skill and its sub-skills can be developed through effective practices. Applegate et al. (2009) have further claimed that fluency and comprehension should go together because a reader who is slow but understands the text can never be treated as a good reader.

A stagnant reading comprehension situation has been identified among the adolescents in the USA and the Institute for Education Sciences of the US Department of Education awards fund for three projects for the enhancement of reading comprehension skill of the adolescents in 2010. Goldman et al. (2016) have analysed the findings of three projects in order to find the common findings that can contribute to the enhancement of the reading comprehension skill of the US adolescents. One of the major findings of the study is that, the purposeful engagement of students in different reading activities helps readers achieve the reading comprehension skill (Goldman et al., 2016). Goldman et al. (2016) further claim that although students

learn to read in the primary schools, students in the secondary level read to learn which means that the secondary students read for comprehension.

Although Bangladesh secondary English curriculum does not support reading aloud for the students of grades IX and X and labels reading aloud as part of speaking practices, Lipka (2017) reports from a longitudinal study with 477 students studying from grades II to VI in 30 schools of a district in North America that oral fluency in reading has a positive impact on reading comprehension.

However, it is reasonable to discuss the reading teaching situation in secondary schools in Bangladesh. The following section discusses the English reading teaching situation in Bangladesh.

2.9 English Reading Teaching Situation in Bangladesh

English reading teaching and learning situation in the past as well at present is not satisfactory in Bangladesh. The researcher's secondary school reading experiences about 35/36 years ago say that English teachers read out the text and clarify it in L1; and the teachers almost never engage learners in reading practices in the classrooms to enhance their reading comprehension. Some teachers ask students to read the text aloud but that is not to develop learners' understanding; it is done to check students' pronunciation and fluency in reading. Although some students read at home, that is their personal reading, not as a part of reading teaching by teachers. Chaudhury and Karim (2014) claim that, reading instruction and reading abilities of students at tertiary level are not also satisfactory.

Michael West about a hundred years ago claimed from the findings of an action research that "I found that reading could be speeded up by the use of Before Questions and cultivation of a searching attitude" (West, n.d., p. xiv). This before

reading questions is an important part of one of the three stages of reading teaching stated by NCTB (2012a & 1995), Rogers (2005a, 2005b, 2005c), and Williams (1992). The researcher's experiences as a secondary school teacher for 8 years and as an English language teacher educator for long 22 years show that the English reading teaching and learning situation has not changed much from the time of Michael West. Even after 100 years from Michael West's time, Ebrahim (2017) describes the similar situation. Ebrahim (2017) states:

> Teachers in our schools and colleges generally teach students reading skill using the age-old Grammar Translation Method. In this method, teachers read out and translate the texts into Bangla and the learners listen to the teachers inactively.

Ebrahim (2017) further claims that most of the teachers and the students do not understand that reading is a skill and no skill can be achieved without continuous practices. As per the rules of teaching of reading, asserts Ebrahim (2017), teachers should set some questions for students to answer during or after reading. Those questions can be short questions, filling in the blanks, true/false exercise, matching sentences or words, information transfer, etc. Students are supposed to read the text themselves, answer the questions, check answers in pairs and get feedback from the teachers. Ebrahim (2017) claims that, through continuous practices, students can achieve better reading comprehension skill. He maintains:

> Through the continuous practices of reading and answering questions, students become able to understand any text. Although some English teachers know how to develop students' reading skill, they cannot engage students in the reading practice as other teachers and students are not interested in the practices.

Ebrahim (2017) further claims that higher level English reading skill is required to study in the universities of English speaking countries as well as in other high ranking universities of the world. However, the researcher's experiences show that most

Bangladeshi students fare badly in reading in the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) or in Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). The classroom teaching observations by Hoque (2016) reveals that all the 10 EFL teachers teaching at higher secondary level, in most cases, explain the reading text and the exercises, and then ask students to complete the task in pairs or in small groups.

A study by Saha and Khan (2014) with 100 rural and 100 urban third grade students of government primary schools reveals that the Bangla reading comprehension rate is poorer in both the areas but the situation in rural areas is worse. Saha and Khan (2014) claim that one of the reasons for poor performance is insufficient training of teachers.

Billah (2014) has claimed that teachers are the most valuable persons in the classrooms to help students develop English reading skill. He further claims that students lacking reading skill usually get dropped out from schools; cannot be successful in social life; and are usually low-paid. Billah (2014) further asserts that stronger reading comprehension skill helps to fare better in all other subjects students have to study in schools; and better reading skill positively influences personal and professional lives. If teachers are good, they keep the students busy on-task, ask students questions to check their understanding, and provide feedback; and if the teachers are excellent, they attach importance to cognitive process of reading (Roehler & Duffy, 1984 as cited in Taylor et al. 2002); and if the teachers are outstanding, they purposefully engage students in reading activities for comprehension (Pressley et al., 2001as cited in Taylor et al., 2002). They further claim that learners themselves have got their own way of understanding and meaning construction which should be recognised by the teachers.

However, an experimental study on 32 second semester undergraduate students in Pelanka Raya, Indonesia reveals that the proper use of IERS (Intensive-Extensive

Reading Strategy) improve the reading comprehension and fluency of the readers (Miftah, 2013). What the researcher means by IERS is similar to the three stages of teaching of reading such as pre-, while-, and post-reading stages (NCTB, 2012a & 2016; Watkins, 2007; Williams, 1992; & Rogers, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c) where each stage has some activities for the teachers and the readers to follow strictly during the intervention.

As the current study attempts to explore the status of teaching and assessment of English reading skill at secondary level of education in Bangladesh, knowing about the teaching and assessment practices in other countries may be of use to compare Bangladesh situation with that of other countries. Therefore, the researcher discusses the teaching and assessment of reading in other countries in the following section.

2.10 English Reading Teaching Practices in Other Countries

Like Bangladesh, the international reading teaching scenario is not also satisfactory. It is reported in a doctoral dissertation by Sidek (2010) that the English reading comprehension skill of Malaysian tertiary students is a critical issue. Sidek (2010) reported that the English reading score in Malaysian University English Test (MUET) conducted with 685 third and fourth year students of Islamic Science University of Malaysia in 2007 was 67.5 in raw score out of 120 points resulting in failure to meet the minimum requirement to pass the test and making them ineligible to have the certificate of graduation. A study by Balfakeh (2009) with 120 students (70 boys and 50 girls) and 15 English teachers from three secondary schools in Yemen reveals that teachers put more emphasis on English pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar in teaching reading; and as a result, comprehension is ignored in teaching reading skill in schools. Sensing the poor condition of reading comprehension in England and Wales, the government has recently attached more importance to reading teaching and assessment; has prepared a

national curriculum for reading; and started arranging reading assessment separately from speaking, listening, and writing (Harrison, Bailey, & Dewar, 1998).

Marland (2003) mentions David Lambert, a lecturer at the University of London, Institute of Education, who was dissatisfied with secondary teachers' limited capability to enable learners to read different texts. According to Marland (2003), David Lambert advocated for teaching language across subjects which, he believed, would improve the English reading skill of the students.

'One of the most characteristic features of communicative language teaching is that, it pays systematic attention to functional as well as structural aspects of language combining these into a more communicative view' (Littlewood, 1988, p.1). In teaching and learning a language, functions have to be attached more importance than forms (Larsen-Freeman, 2004).

A quantitative study conducted in Bangladesh with 108 Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) level students and 10 English teachers reports that students face difficulty in understanding English texts:

> The study shows that many-faceted problems exist with students' reading skills. The main problem is their insufficient vocabulary. New words in every sentence prove a main hurdle for them to understand texts. Many students depend on dictionary meaning more than contextual meaning of words. As a result, they fail to understand the meaning words assume in the context of a text. Moreover, most of the students are unable to understand and analyse long sentences in a text (Rahman 2004, p. 162).

Although there are different kinds of reading such as reading aloud, silent reading, skimming, and scanning, Dechant & Smith (1977) allege that the goal of reading is the comprehension of meaning. For better understanding (communication), the reader has to decode the message encoded by the writer. Dechant & Smith (1977) claim that reading activities involve perception, reasoning, recall, evaluating, imagination,

organisation, application and problem solving. Rahman (2004) claims that the English reading skill of the learners in Bangladesh is poor resulting in poor quality of education in the country. Additionally, he alleges that the higher education of the country suffers a setback because of students' poor level of English reading skill.

A qualitative study in the USA with 1040 secondary and higher secondary English teachers reveals that teachers attach less importance to higher order reading skill related to evaluating and judging during teaching a piece of text (Patterson & Duer, 2006). Although the teachers attach less importance to higher order questions in reading, the researchers claim that the reading skill judged by the English teachers is based on students' drawing conclusions from the information provided in the text; making inferences from the text regarding main theme(s); summarising the text covering all the main ideas; inferring cause-effect relationships; identifying the author's purpose of writing; and recognising and recalling information and comparisons. Harrison et al. (1998) referring to Derrida (1976) claim that a reader's role is not to explore meaning in the text but to produce meaning and to disseminate it through rebuilding the text in different ways.

A study by Iqbal et al. (2015) with 60 secondary students from four schools in India and 20 English teachers from those four schools reveals that students' poor comprehension in English reading is due to poor command over vocabulary; habit of memorising; and teaching targeting only examinations and certificates. The researchers tested 60 students' reading skill through examinations; interviewed 20 students and 20 English teachers from those schools. The study reveals that English reading teaching in India is not satisfactory. When assessment is so important, the concept of assessment and testing should be made clear made clear to the readers. The following section deals with the relationship between assessment and testing.

2.11 Assessment and Testing

Assessment aims at estimating the magnitude of some attributes of a person (Mousavi, 2009, cited in Brown & Abeywickrama, 2019). In education, assessment is a continuous process that involves a wide range of methodological techniques (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2019). As cited earlier in Chapter One and section 1.9.3, assessment is the feedback provided by teachers on students' literate behaviours in the form of grading students' work; classifying students as handicapped or above or below grade level; and identifying the areas of improvement (Johnston & Costello, 2005). Johnston and Costello (2005, p. 147) further state that "Testing is a subset of assessment practices in which children's literate behavior is elicited in more controlled conditions" and assessment is a set of social practices where different tools are used in testing for various purposes (Johnston & Costello, 2005).

Assessment in education tells teachers and others what level of progress has happened to a particular learner or what kinds of supports the students need or whether any change in delivery style is required or not (Thorndike, Cunningham, Thorndike, & Hagen, 1991). Whether intended or accidental, a good teacher always keeps on assessing their students sometime to know their progress and achievement, and sometimes to identify the areas requiring supports or sometimes to judge the effectiveness of the teaching approaches and techniques or of the resources.

On the other hand, like Johnston and Costello (2005), claim Brown and Abeywickrama (2019) that tests are sub-sets of assessment, which measure a particular ability of a learner or of a person.

Alongside learning about the assessment and testing, it is also important to know about the purposes and types of assessment. The following sub-section deals with why assessment is important and how many types of assessment there are.

2.11.1 Purposes and Types of Assessment

Assessment, whether formal or informal, has different purposes. Test is a single part of assessment where assessment can include many other testing procedures; and measurement and evaluation are also parts of assessment (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2019). Measurement is the numerical expression of a test and the evaluation is the qualitative expression; the meaning the number or marks connote is called evaluation (Thorndike et al., 1991). There are some kinds of assessment based on their purposes. They are placement test, diagnostic test, achievement test, and proficiency test (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2019; Harrison, 1986). Placement test is designed to select new students for a course of study so that the course can be run with approximately same level of students (Harrison, 1986) and this kind of a test includes the achievement and proficiency tests because this test is conducted to decide what level someone is at of a course (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2019).

A diagnostic test is conducted to identify the areas students need supports for learning to happen and that is why this kind of a test is called formative assessment or assessment for learning (AfL) to happen (Harrison, 1986). AfL or CA (continuous assessment) in Bangladesh secondary curriculum aims at providing supports to students for learning to happen. Taras (2005) rightly claims that AfL is followed by constructive feedback so that learners can minimise the gap between the work being assessed and the required standard (Taras, 2005). This CA or AfL is important as there is evidence that formative assessment followed by feedback yields considerable learning gains for students (Black & William, 1998). However, students must be engaged in reading activities and provided with constructive feedback for achieving better reading comprehension skill (Marchand & Furrer, 2014).

The most common test a teacher administers all over the world is the achievement test in which the teacher tests what a learner has learnt from a chapter or a unit or from a course (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2019). In other words, an achievement test tries to measure the knowledge growth of a learner over a period of time; and that is why some linguists call it a summative assessment or AoL or assessment of learning (Harrison, 1986). AoL measures what a learner can do after undergoing a course of study (Harrison, 1986) and if someone tests language skills against global standard, they are testing English language proficiency of a student (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2019). Usually, a summative assessment does not have feedback as it determines the place or learning growth of a student (Taras, 2005).

For a test to be labeled as good, it must be reliable, valid, and practical. If a test or a question paper produces similar results with different students studying at same level of education from different places, the test is reliable; to be valid, a test must measure what is intended to measure (Harrison, 1986). For example, if a teacher wants to test the speaking skill of students and if the teacher conducts a written test, it would be totally invalid. In order to be practical, a test must be well-planned in advance; a test maker must consider time needed to complete the test; the cost of producing and administering the test must be reasonable; resources required for administering the test must be easily available; and so on. And if the mentioned factors are not taken into account, the test can never be practical (Harrison, 1986).

Different skills are assessed through employing different strategies and tools. What the linguists say about reading skill assessment strategies is provided below:

2.11.2 English Reading Skill Assessment Strategies

Assessment plays an important role in accelerating students' learning and in skill practices of students as assessment system often has positive impact on classroom

practices or in other words, what is assessed is practised in the classrooms (Brown, 2000). Davis (2007) asserts that learning outcomes are the chief goals of a lesson and the learning outcomes are set based on the curriculum expectations. Chamot and O'Malley (1994) assert that reading comprehension enhancement is the progress in reading. Assessment of reading includes daily basis or periodic documentation of reading progress and literate behaviours of learners; and evaluation based on the pre-set goals or objectives of reading lessons.

Moreover, assessment reports the teachers whether or not the learning outcomes have been achieved (Thorndike et al., 1991). As cited earlier in section 2.11.1 above that, there are mainly two types of assessment, assessment for learning (AfL) or formative assessment and assessment of learning (AoL) or summative assessment. Assessment for learning plays an important role for teachers to build reading comprehension instruction around the readers' interests, strengths, and their needs. Westwood (2001) claims that assessment should aim at finding areas the learners need supports. According to Westwood (2001), if a learner is observed to be unable to complete a task, the teacher or the assessor should scaffold enabling the learners to accomplish the task. A teacher can employ different approaches to teaching and assessing reading skill based on the learners' motivational and attitudinal factors which contribute to students' achievement reducing the number of failed students (Westwood, 2001).

Davis (2007) and Brown and Abeywickrama (2019) claim that AfL or formative assessment plays an important role in choosing reading contents, to decide on the pace of the lesson and the teaching approaches. Johnston and Costello (2005) assert that assessment aims at benefitting learners through supports as required. Learning of students is enhanced through sharing the learning goals of each lesson with students. Paris and Stahl (2005) allege that assessing the effect of teaching strategies on

students depends on the validity, the reliability, and the sensitivity of assessment. As cited in section 2.11.1 that it is not possible to decide if a reading instruction is effective or not unless the assessment has passed the test of validity, reliability, and practicality (Paris & Stahl, 2005). Although it is difficult to exactly assess the progress in reading in a second or an additional language, reading assessment should cover all the important aspects of reading comprehension including metacognitive aspects (Paris & Stahl, 2005). It is reported by Dixon and Williams (2018) that although New Zealand literacy teachers believe that assessment has a positive role to play in the advancement of students' learning and they practise the formative assessment strategies.

Bangladesh secondary curriculum suggests two kinds of assessments: formative assessment or AfL which is called continuous assessment (CA) in the current curriculum (NCTB, 2012a); and the other is summative assessment (SA) or assessment of learning (AoL) usually held at the end of a term or a course or at the end of an academic year. For CA, 20% marks have been allotted for every subject including English. Areas of assessment and marks distribution have been shown below (NCTB, 2012a, p. 27):

	Assessment area	Marks
a	Class work	10
b	Homework and investigation work	05
c	Class test	05
		Total 20

The students are expected to achieve the four skills of English language by being engaged in different language practice activities including reading. The curriculum

states that class work include 'narrating or writing answers, drawing (pictures, tables, graphs, and charts), discussions and debates, role play, practical work, etc. Listening, speaking, reading, and writing are considered as class work in Bangla and English' (NCTB, 2012a, p. 27).

The curriculum expects that homework must be done by the learners themselves and the homework should facilitate thinking ability and creativity of learners. Teachers will assess the homework and preserve records. The curriculum set some reading testing activities which include MCQ, gap filling, true/false, matching, answering open and close ended questions, information transfer, making sentences from substitution tables, rearrangement of sentences, describing charts, graphs, pictures, etc. Total weight of the reading skill is 50 marks where 40 marks from text materials and 10 from supplementary reading. By text materials, the curriculum meant materials developed by the question setters and the text 'should not be taken from any textbooks' (NCTB, 2012a, p. 82). However, in reality, three pieces of texts weighing 22 marks are taken from the textbook. The current CA or formative assessment (AfL) and summative assessment (AoL) practices in secondary schools in Bangladesh illustrate a poor situation of reading skill assessment.

Reading assessment situation was also perceived to be poor in England and Wales by the education authority. In order to overcome the situation, an international seminar was arranged in England in 1995 (Harrison & Salinger, 1998). Although the features of reading assessment are similar all over the world, the seminar participants worked together to find some new ways of reading assessment that could be of great use in assessing English reading skill properly (Harrison & Salinger, 1998). However, assessment should be a part and parcel of our daily classroom activities, and it should measure students' and teachers' long-term accomplishments (Afflerbach, 2010).

It is clear from the above discussion that Bangladesh secondary curriculum (NCTB, 2012a) suggests two kinds of assessment. They are AfL (assessment for learning) or CA (continuous assessment); and AoL (assessment of learning) or summative assessment. Assessment strategies practised locally and globally are discussed in the following section.

2.11.3 English Reading Skill Assessment Practices in Bangladesh

Being able to read fluently in academic context is "to integrate text and background information appropriately and efficiently" (Grabe & Stoller, 2002, p. 28) and Hellekjaer (2008) claim that integrating the background knowledge is using the content knowledge a reader already has with them and knowledge of the language. Hellekjaer (2008) further clarifies that the background or contextual information involves other cognitive processes where the reader focuses on meta-cognitive monitoring and reading strategies. Reading strategies of students chiefly depends on teachers' teaching styles and the assessment scores are dependent on how the learners have practised. As curriculum attaches much importance to the development of English reading skill development of students, there are many reading practice opportunities in the *English for Today* (EfT) book. In section B of almost every lesson, the instruction is like – read the following text and answer the questions that follow or answer the questions in section C and/or in section D of the lessons contained in *English for Today* book. Of course, sometimes reading texts are also there in section A of the textbook (e.g. NCTB, 2012b, p. 11) and sometimes in section C (e.g. NCTB, 2012b, p. 16).

Teachers are supposed to tell the students to read the texts and then to answer the questions or to ask and answer the questions in pairs; complete sentences; transfer

information; identify true and false statements; match parts of sentences or word meanings; make a flowchart; provide meanings of some new words and phrases; choose the correct/best answers; fill out the blanks with or without clues or with different forms of verbs and adjectives; rearrange sentences; complete tables; and provide or choose headings for reading paragraphs. It is suggested by NCTB (2012a & 2012b) and Williams (1992) that teachers must provide the readers with reasons for reading the text by asking learners to read the questions or other activities that the learners would have to complete from their reading.

Teachers can use the reading sections or parts of the lessons to engage the learners in reading practices and they can also use any of the lessons to test learners' reading ability. However, the curriculum (NCTB, 2012a) advocates for using an authentic text which students are believed not to have studied earlier. Nation (2009) claims that comprehension questions direct students' attention to the reading text. And in order to check comprehension of the readers, continues Nation (2009) that questions which include literal comprehension of the text; questions that help draw inferences from the text; questions that help check if the readers can use the text for other purposes; and questions that indicate the readers are able to be critical to the text should be set. However, Hopkins and Nettle (2008) claim that along with other test items, true/false, MCQs, answering questions using a single word or a phrase can be used to assess students' reading skill.

Teaching and assessment strategies practised in the classrooms matters in achieving better score in academic reading. Hellekjaer (2008) reports in a study with 217 senior level Norwegian upper secondary school students who upon completion would qualify for university education that, two-thirds of the respondents with English as a Foreign Language (EFL) courses did not achieve the equivalent of the minimum IELTS Band

score 6 which is usually required for admission to British and Australian universities. The study reveals that the poor test score was due to weaknesses in reading teaching instruction where reading by students was neglected; and students did not learn about the purposes of reading, and did not learn how to exploit meaning of new words from contexts. Bangladesh secondary English curriculum (NCTB, 2012a) emphasises skill achievement in reading. The curriculum asserts that learners' reading comprehension and higher order thinking skill will be assessed in reading (NCTB, 2012a).

It is a practice to test reading skill with a text that learners have not studied earlier. It is not possible to test one's reading skill with a piece of text that the learners have already read. The curriculum (NCTB, 2012a, p. 69) asserts that 'Text or test items should not be taken directly from the textbooks. Test items should be designed within contexts similar to textbook contents'. But the reading skill in schools is assessed with a text that was already taught and practised (Appendix 8, NCTB, 2017). As a result, there is a practice followed in the schools to set a text from their textbooks for reading skill testing.

The Bangladesh secondary curriculum attaches considerable importance to reading skill development which is observable in the allotment of marks for reading. The curriculum has allotted 50 marks for reading skill and there is scope for reading practices in every lesson. There is a total of 14 units in the *English for Today* (NCTB, 2012b) book for classes nine and ten. Those 14 units consist of 70 lessons in which there are 106 pieces of texts for reading skill practices. The National Curriculum (NCTB, 2012a) shows that total weight of reading in the SSC examination is 50 per cent. In the half-yearly and year-final examinations, similar amount of marks have been allotted for assessment of English reading skill. The NCTB (2012a) suggests some testing items in the curriculum and in the sample test or question paper (Appendix 8). The reading testing items have been presented below:

2.11.4 English Reading Skill Testing Items

The secondary English curriculum (NCTB, 2012a) has clearly spelt-out what test items would be there in testing of reading. It stresses, as stated in section 2.11.3, that there would be open and close ended question answering; gap filling with or without clues; substitution table; information transfer; rearrangement; and summarisation of the text. Additionally, the curriculum also asserts that there would be MCQs, matching, diagrams, and flow charts. The curriculum suggests that the test items for the supplementary readers would be 'answering questions, and summarising'.

However, Robinson and Muskopf (1964) ask for reducing the questions such as MCQs, and True/False as being able to answer those kinds of questions does not guarantee students understanding and for checking comprehension of a reader, Robinson and Muskopf (1964) suggest for interpretative and higher order questions which really tell the assessor if the reader has understood the text or not.

However, only stating the assessment strategies and the test items in the curriculum is not enough for the proper implementation of the curriculum. Teachers need rigorous training enabling them to teach and assess the learning of the students. The following sub-section describes the secondary English teachers' status of training in teaching and assessment of reading skill.

2.11.5 Training of Teachers in Teaching and Assessment

Teacher training plays an important role in quality teaching and proper testing and assessment. Steele and Zhang (2016) claim that teachers' low performance in teaching English in Japan is due to insufficient teacher training opportunities and in order to improve the situation, the Japan government arranges training for the English

teachers. TQI-SEP (2009) understands the importance of teacher training and organises 21-day training for the secondary English teachers who were expected to perform better after receiving the training. English in Action (EiA, 2008 - 2017) also provides training to 51000 primary and secondary English teachers with a view to enhancing the English teachers' performances and some of the English teachers are now more confident in teaching English.

Wilson (2016) claims that in-service and pre-service training develops professionalism of teachers and this professional attitudes help improve the commitment of teachers. However, the training provided by the mentioned organisations is one off. Roy (2004) claims that CPD (Continuous Professional Development) is important for staff development and for better performances of the English language teachers. In those training sessions, so far as the researcher's knowledge goes, there were one or two sessions on assessment and testing but more focus was on teaching methods and techniques. Therefore, that training could make them neither good teachers nor good assessors. That might not be only for insufficient training of teachers; it might be because of assessment style followed in schools or in the SSC examinations. However, the overall training situation in the country is not good. Alamgir (2019) reports referring to a study findings of CAMPE that 55 per cent of the English teachers do not have necessary training to teach English properly. This lack of training, according to Alamgir (2019), is one of the reasons for secondary level teachers' poor performances.

Before starting the research, it is wise identify the lens through which the researcher would look at reading. The lens would keep the researcher concentrate on the specific areas of the study. The current study uses the lens of three stages strategy of reading as suggested in the curriculum (NCTB, 2012a). The lens has been presented below:

2.12 Lens Used to Look at Teaching of Reading

Dissertation writing or any kinds of research requires a good understanding of the topic under investigation. For this reason, a conceptual framework needs to be developed to guide the direction of the investigation showing and connecting the theories guiding the study. A well-organised conceptual framework shows how the research has been conducted. The conceptual framework or the lens through which the researcher looked at teaching of reading was as follows:
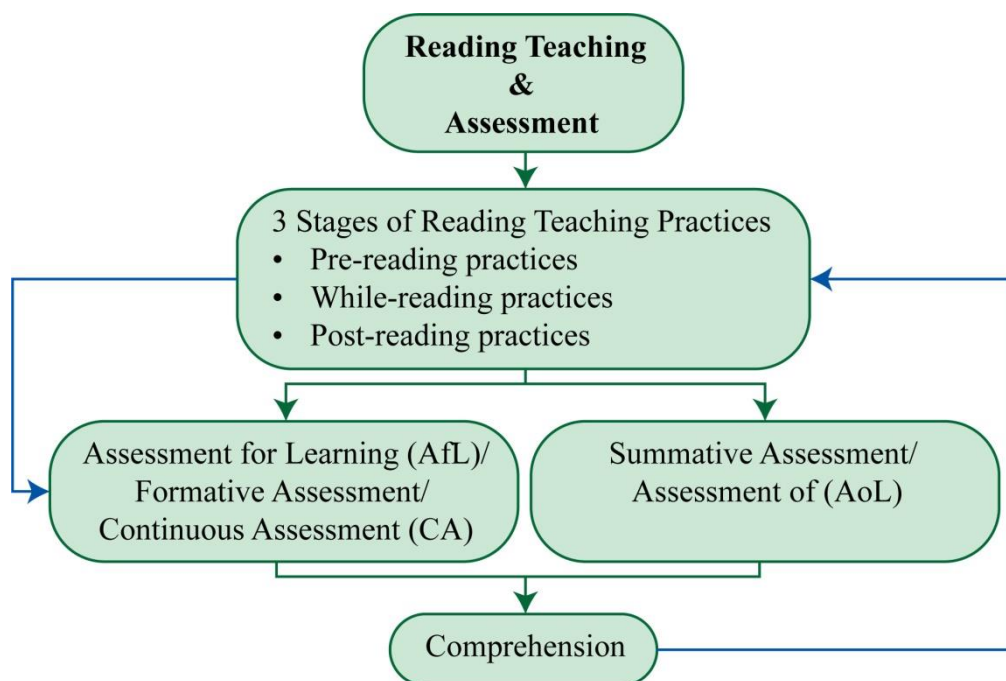
Lens Used to Look at Reading

2.13 Conclusion

Reading is one of the four basic skills of English language. It is a receptive skill where a reader has to understand or capture the meaning of written and printed texts (Spratt et al., 2011; Ur, 2011; Robinson & Muskopf, 1964). Reading is chiefly a silent process aiming at understanding although a small number of readers love to read aloud. Although reading skill has many benefits (Islam, 2014; Grabe & Stoller, 2011),

literature shows that reading is not taught with added importance and most of the English teachers do not follow the proper approaches neither in the secondary schools in Bangladesh nor in other countries of the East Asia regardless of the government policy and the curriculum expectations (Christ & Makarani, 2009).

Although the target of teaching English reading in schools is enabling learners to decode meaning (Chaudhury & Karim, 2014; Spratt et al., 2011), this strive for deciphering remains ignored as most teachers stick to traditional Grammar-Translation Method and the teaching and learning of reading skill aim at the results in the examinations, not learning because "all students are exam oriented" and they "don't care how much they can express themselves in English" (Christ & Makarani, 2009, p. 84). Although the Bangladesh secondary English curriculum (NCTB, 2012a) spells out the place of English reading in the curriculum; prepares a textbook and a TCG to be used in the classroom teaching and learning; suggests ways to teach and assess English reading skill, the English teachers do not follow the curriculum guidelines regarding teaching and assessment of reading skill in schools (Ebrahim, 2017).

20% of the total marks in English are allotted to test students' four skills through classwork, homework and investigation work, and class tests. 50% marks or 50 out of 100 marks have been exclusively allotted for reading skill assessment in the AoL. However, Fitzgerald (1993) from his study with the migrated school students in America claims that students require added attention from teachers in order to cope with reading ability which is considered the most fundamental academic skill. Rogers (2005a, 2005b, & 2005c), Fitzgerald (1993), Pelincsar and Brown (1994), Williams (1992) clearly acknowledge the role of teachers and their effective teaching style in developing students' reading skill as an additional language or a foreign language.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

"Research is a systematic approach to finding answers to questions" (Hatch and Farhady, 1982, p. 1) and being systematic means having a well-organised design of the study to be conducted (Freeman & Long, 1991). A researcher has to adopt some well-planned ways to find the answers to the research questions. Those ways together are called methodology which is "a theory of how enquiry should proceed" (Schwandt, 2007, as cited in Bazeley, 2013, p. 8). Methodology is the combination of methods employed in order to collect and analyse data. What methods would be employed in a particular project depends on the type of the research problem; and the researcher has to decide which methodology and methods would best fit the study. Based on the nature of the research problem, a researcher decides on whether the study would be conducted using qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods. That is, a researcher has to decide beforehand what methods would be suitable for the study and has to justify why they have chosen the methods. The methods usually used in qualitative social science research include different kinds of Interviews, Observations, Document Analysis, and Focus Group Discussions (Islam & Fruque, 2017). The current research is a qualitative study. In order to investigate into the research problem, the researcher interviewed the four English teachers of two secondary schools in Dhaka city, and one Curriculum Specialist from the NCTB and a teacher educator from government Teachers' Training College, Dhaka with separate interview schedules; observed teaching and assessment of English reading skill in schools; arranged Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with 40 secondary students studying in

classes nine and 10 of the mentioned selected schools. It is worth mentioning that in each FGD group, there were only 10 students selected through lottery. Additionally, documents such as the *English for Today* book (NCTB, 2012b); the *National Curriculum* (NCTB, 2012a); the *English Grammar and Composition* (NCTB, 2016); Sample Test prepared by the NCTB (Appendix 8); Sample of a Test Used for a School Examination (Appendix 9); and Guidelines for the Test Setters and the Markers for English (Appendix 10) were reviewed. The mentioned research methods were chosen as those methods helped the researcher to go deep into the research questions, and delve deep into the participants' world.

3.2 Qualitative Research

The term qualitative research is an umbrella term which refers to "a variety of approaches to research that tend to focus on the qualities of things more than their quantity" (Bazeley, 2013, p. 3). Data in qualitative research are termed *soft* as they are rich in detailed description of places, persons, and their conversations; and they cannot be handled with statistical tools (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Denzin and Lincoln (2003a) assert that qualitative researchers do not try to prove a hypothesis rather they are concerned with understanding the behaviours of the participants in their own frame of reference. In other words, qualitative research is a study of a participant or a subject in its natural state; a study of as it is or as it does or functions (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Based on Bogdan and Biklen (2007) and Denzin and Lincoln (2003a), it can be claimed that, the area of qualitative research is the world of lived experiences in which beliefs and activities are influenced by the way of life in a particular setting. Qualitative research involves collecting data from people about their lived experiences living in their own settings (Punch, 2005). Laverack (2017) advises a qualitative researcher to remain open to many different possibilities because the

participants focus on their own lived experiences and on their own framework of meaning, not what the researcher has expected or the meaning that the experienced scholars have provided.

Denzin and Lincoln (2003b) further add that qualitative research places emphasis on qualities of entities; ways of thinking and doing; and a qualitative researcher believes that meanings are constructed through social interactions. A qualitative researcher attaches importance to how social experience is created and meaning is made and remade. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) echo the similar idea when they state that qualitative researchers collect data through continuous contact with the subjects observing what they do, and how they do that; then they try to find the reasons for doing that. The qualitative researchers enter into the world of the participants or the respondents under study and get close to them earning their trust and recording what they say, observing what they do, and collecting photographs, newspaper articles, memos which can supplement the otherwise collected data (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

Willis (2008) stated that in quantitative research, a hypothesis or a presumption or presumptions, and the methods of investigations to prove them are pre-set and the researchers are not allowed to deviate from the pre-set target and strategies of investigation. In qualitative research, on the other hand, researchers have to take the emerging issues into cognizance in the course of the study and investigate how these affect the phenomenon in question. In qualitative research, preference goes to examining qualities rather than quantities although both the qualitative and the quantitative ways of investigations are complementary; one enriches the other; and quantities themselves are used to measure qualities (Kaplan, 1964, cited in Keeves & Adams, 1997).

McDonough and McDonough (1997) claimed that the results of the quantitative research can be generalised. In this kind of research, objectivity and generalisability are closely related. On the other hand, the results of the qualitative research are subjective from the researcher's or the participants' point of view. McDonough and McDonough (1997) assert, that is why the results of a qualitative research cannot be generalised although can be trusted if the study has been rigorously carried out and honestly reported. Molley and Colyar (2018) assert that a qualitative researcher has to master the art of story-telling as they have to be members of the intellectual community through the exchange of stories extracted from the research participants. In telling or narrating the story or stories, a researcher has to consider the non-human elements that contribute to shape the story. Molley and Colyar (2018) further claim that the readers of the research report can infer the theme(s) of the story and the storyline from the research questions.

There has been a considerable debate among the methodologists and the researchers about the value and legitimacy of the set standards for judging qualitative research. In answer to questions raised particularly in relation to the degree to which the terms credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability can be applied to qualitative research, Lincoln and Guba (1985) claim that as the purpose of qualitative research is to understand the phenomena from the participants' perspectives, the participants themselves are the right people to judge the credibility of the results. Transferability refers to the extent to which the results of qualitative research are generalisable. The results of a qualitative research are not generalisable as those are the participants' standpoint; different people may have different viewpoints (McDonough & McDonough, 1997). However, the qualitative researchers can

enhance the generalisability by describing the contexts, settings, procedures, and rigour maintained throughout the study.

In order to be dependable, a qualitative researcher needs to state the ever-changing contexts in which the study was conducted, and how the course of the study was affected by the changes. Confirmability refers to the degree to which the results of a qualitative study can be confirmed or supported by other researchers. In order to increase the rate of confirmability, a researcher needs to document the procedures of checking and re-checking the data throughout the study; search for and describe instances contradictory to the prior observations; and can get the data audited by the participants in order to check any bias and data distortion (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Through the continuous verification and correction of data in course of the study by the researchers, and through maintaining rigour all through the study, the reliability and the validity of the research can be increased (Morse, Barret, Mayan, Olson, & Speirs, 2002).

3.2.1 Semi-structured Interview

Hallway and Jefferson (2000) state that interviewing the respondents with a series of questions is one of the common and popular qualitative methods used in social science researches. According to Gillham (2000), an interview is a kind of conversation usually between two persons one them being the seeker of responses from the other. Interviews are of usually four kinds: informal, unstructured, semi-structured, and structured (Bernard, 2006). Whatever the kinds of interviewing is, Gillham (2000) claims that, interviewing or eliciting responses may benefit the interviewer or the interviewee or the both by gaining knowledge about the participants and their profession; the participants may get solutions to their professional problems;

and they may be more insightful about their professions through reflecting on the questions asked during the interview. The findings of the interviews can also highlight some real problems and show the ways to solve them, and thereby benefitting a larger section of the professionals.

Gillham (2000) additionally points out that the direction of conversation in a qualitative research is guided, not controlled by the interviewer. Although interviews are divided into categories such as informal, structured, semi-structured, and unstructured (Bernard, 2006), the 'structured-unstructured dimension is false' (Gillham, 2000, p. 3) because experienced and expert interviewers always have an interview structure or plan which they follow although they ask a variety of probing questions if the situation demands. According to Bogdan and Biklen (2007), most interviews begin with small talks with a view to developing a rapport with the interviewee. Gillham (2000) asserts that, an interview should be started with a simple question and from a very wide point of view and gradually it should delve more deep on the basis of the research questions. Gillham (2000) further adds that a good interviewer must be a good listener as well as a good observer in order to be able to read the non-verbal cues of the participants as well as the surrounding happenings.

Interviewing can be done in different ways including face-to-face interviews, interviewing through audio-video technology, and interview can be done with the help of the trained research assistants. Bernard (2006) states that interviewing ranges from informal interactions to highly formal interactions with the participants. Bernard (2006) also adds that informal interview is an interview that lacks structure and control; and the interviewer just continues their conversations during the daily activities of the participant(s); and at the end, the researcher jots down the field notes from memory. He additionally asserts that, an unstructured interview is a kind of

informed informal interaction with the subject where the subject enjoys freedom to say as much as they like. Although the interview is informal, the interviewer must have a plan to know the world-view of the participant(s). When a researcher wants to know about the lived experiences of the participant(s), unstructured interviewing is used.

A structured interview is a formal interview where the interviewer asks the same questions to the subjects from a list made already for this purpose. A questionnaire is a kind of structured interview when the questions are asked face-to-face (Bernard, 2006).

However, Bernard (2000) further adds that, semi-structured interviewing is similar to the unstructured interview but the interviewer has some written questions as a guide so that they can cover the target areas during the interviewing; and these written questions are supplemented by probing questions during the interview as per the demand of the situation. Semi-structured interviewing is good for very busy and high profile participants because they cannot manage to afford long time with the researcher. It has sufficient focus on some particular areas of the research but the participants have opportunities to introduce their own ideas or topics into the interview.

3.2.2 Observation

Observation is considered to be a key method in much social and behavioural sciences research (Alder & Alder, 1994, cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2003a), and foundation of ethnographic study (Werner & Schoepfle, 1987, cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2003a). In any kind of social science research, a researcher has to observe what is happening; and what the gestures and postures indicate to infer if the expressed words are

corroborative or contradictory. Neuman (1997) states that if the researcher goes to the participants' everyday work place and behaves as a member of the participant community being observed, it is called participant observation but when the researchers observe the participants keeping themselves away from the participants allowing the participants to remain undisturbed, that kind of observation is called non-participant observation. Neuman (1997) further asserts that in a qualitative research, a researcher collects data through careful watching, listening, smelling, tasting, touching, and so on; that is, a researcher uses their sense organs for data collection in a qualitative research. They try to capture the physical setting in which they collect data. Denzin and Lincoln (2003b) state that the social science researchers have to keep their eyes on the participant(s) as well as the other happenings around.

Neuman (1997) points out that qualitative researchers look for the colour, size, position, setting of things such as furniture and equipment; tidiness and untidiness; and they attach importance to trivial and every detail because qualitative researchers believe that, the way of life and living, philosophy of life, taste, etc. is expressed through them. Not only that, a qualitative researcher has to consider the context in which an event occurs; because if every detail is not noticed, full understanding of the event is hampered.

3.2.3 Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

Focus group discussion is a strategy in qualitative research where open discussion is organised in a small group ideally with respondents from six to twelve. Focus group discussion is conducted by a researcher and usually the researcher employs an Assistant Moderator to take notes or record the discussion or doing the both. There is a set of 10/11/12 questions previously constructed for asking during the discussion.

Some probing questions can be asked if situation dictates. The focus group members have to be homogeneous and there must be more than one group, usually three or four groups, to produce valid results. Willis (2008) states that FGD is a kind of group interview where questions are asked by the researcher. "People are brought together and encouraged to talk about the subject of interest" (Morgan, 1997, cited in Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 109). According to Bogdan and Biklen (2007), FGD is important when it is necessary to know the range of views and thoughts of the respondents although there may be someone unwilling to express the individual experiences; and some individuals may try to dominate the talks or divert from the topic of discussion. In that case, the researcher has to bring the participants back to the topic of interest tactfully.

3.2.4 Document Analysis

Document analysis method plays an important role in a qualitative research project helping a researcher making meaning. Bowen (2009) describes document analysis as a qualitative research method in which documents and reports are studied and interpreted by a researcher in order to give the opinion and meaning around the research problem under study. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) state that documents are materials such as photographs, videos, films, memos, letters, and diaries; and documents can be personal produced by individuals for private purposes, and official documents produced by organisations for record keeping or for dissemination purposes. The National Curriculum (NCTB, 2012a); The *English for Today* book (NCTB, 2012b) for classes nine and ten; the Teacher's Curriculum Guide (NCTB, 2016) on the textbook of classes nine and ten; Sample Test Used for School Examination (Appendix 8); and Guidelines for Question Setters and Markers for English (Appendix 10) were studied and analysed for the study as document analysis

helps a researcher to check what the policy documents or any other reports or documents say and what and how the implementers do.

The following sections and the sub-sections describe the design of the study. The design of the study includes the sites of the research and the participants; tools for data collection and how the tools have been administered to collect data; how data have been analysed and interpreted; and how the findings of the study have been presented.

3.3 Design of the Study

The current research was a qualitative study. The researcher chose observation, semi-structured interview, FGD, and document analysis methods because data collected through those four methods could have been triangulated; the observations gave clues to ask suitable probing questions during the interviews with the participating English teachers, the curriculum specialist and the teacher educator. Interviews, observations, and FGDs, and the document analysis methods were employed since those methods helped to understand the way teachers, students, the curriculum specialist, and the teacher educator thought about their world of English reading skill teaching and assessment in secondary schools in Bangladesh, and how those thoughts were formed. The document analysis helped to check if the participants followed what the policy documents asked them to do or not. Observation was chosen to closely study what teachers and students did as Bogdan and Biklen (2007, p. 35) claimed, "If you want to understand the way people think about their world and how those definitions were formed, you need to get close to them, talk and observe them in their day to day life". Then the data collection tools such as observation protocol (Appendix 2), semi-structure interview schedule (Appendix 3), and FGD schedule (Appendix 6) were

prepared (Creswell, 2009) and piloted in another secondary school with English teachers as well as students with a view to developing the researcher's interview and observation skills as well as minimising the faults with the interview schedule, observation protocol, and questioning style, and FGD questions. Additionally, the piloting helped to determine the best ways to observe the participants as well as their teaching and assessment including other activities before and after the classes; and to get a wider context of the participating teachers and students, and their English reading teaching and assessment practices. It deserves a mention that, the observation protocol (Appendix 2) was developed based on the observation protocol prepared and used by the School of Education, University of Nottingham, Malaysia (Appendix 5).

3.3.1 Research Site and Participants

The researcher selected two secondary schools from Dhaka city in consultation with the supervisor and then he visited those schools introducing and seeking permission from the school head teachers and seeking consent from the participants (Creswell, 2009) for the study (Appendix 1). One of the two schools was for boys and the other was for girls. Based on the convenient sampling method, the schools were selected (Creswell, 2009); communication to and from the schools were easier; and the schools easily agreed to be the part of the research. One of the schools was for boys and the other was for girls; one school was government secondary school and the other was non-government secondary school; and one was high performing and the other was poorly performing in terms of the SSC results in the last five years. Out of the four teacher participants, it was preliminarily planned to select two male and two female English teachers teaching in classes nine and ten of the selected schools but in reality there were one male and three female teachers who were teaching English in those two schools in classes nine and 10. Usually, the teachers teaching in the capital city

are considered more aware of the methods and techniques of teaching and assessment
than those who teach in the rural schools because of the availability of professional
training and teaching-learning resources both in terms of quality and quantity. The list
of the teachers with demographic information is given below. Pseudonyms such as
T1, T2, T3, and T4 were assigned to the participants in order to avoid any threats that
might pose for the pieces of information that the participants provided. The
participants' information is presented below in the table:

Sl. No.	Description of teachers	Teacher Status			
1	Names Assigned	T1	T2	T3	T4
2	Sex	Female	Female	Male	Female
3	Experience (in years)	18	16	32	10
4	Academic degree	BA (Hon's), MA (English)	BA (Hon's), MA (English)	MA (English)	BA (Hon's), MA (English)
5	Professional degree	B.Ed.	B.Ed.	X	X
6	Professional/in-service training	ELTIP, CPD (TQI-SEP)	CPD (TQI-SEP), ELT (British Council)	ELTIP, CCE (NAEM)	X
7	Training especially on reading skill teaching and assessment	X	X	X	X
8	Classes per day	4/5	4/5	3/4	4/5
9	Activities other than teaching	EL (English Language) Club; Debating Club, Committees	X	X	X
10	Professional development opportunities in schools	Sharing with colleagues	X	X	X
11	Initiative you take for your professional development	Share ideas with colleagues; attend training sessions (if and when invited); and browse the Internet	X	X	X
12	Did you receive curriculum dissemination training?	Yes	X	X	X

In order to gain access to participants and the schools, the researcher visited the schools; talked to the head teachers and the English teachers about the proposed research; and established a good rapport with them through several visits and friendly behaviours. Harrison, McGibbon, and Morton (2001) state that reciprocal interactions between the researcher and the participants are supposed to make the researcher's access easier. The researcher told the English teachers that if he (the researcher) wrote about the rich experiences of the participating teachers regarding teaching and assessing English reading skill, other English teachers could benefit from their good and effective practices.

Moreover, the Ministry of Education's approval for this study, welcoming behaviour of the researcher, assurance of confidentiality and anonymity, and their freedom to withdraw from the research at any stage helped to gain agreement from teachers to participate in the study. Through lottery, 10 students were selected from each class of nine and ten of the two selected schools making the total number of student participants 40. In every case, the FGD participants were selected through a lottery so that every student in the classroom had the chance to be selected. The researcher wrote roll numbers of all the students in small pieces of paper and jumbled up the pieces of paper containing the all the roll numbers of the class. Then the researcher invited a student to pick up the pieces of paper one by one. If someone was absent from the class, actually some were absent, the researcher got another piece of paper picked. When there were 10 participants, the lottery process was over. Then the researcher set those selected students at a secluded place and started the discussion after exchanging greetings, introducing himself to the students, telling the purpose of the discussion, and setting the ground rules to be followed during the FGD. When the discussion started to deviate from the focus of the discussion, the researcher tactfully brought them back to the point

of discussion. Although the pre-written FGD prompts were in English, the researcher translated the questions in Bangla and students were allowed to take part in the discussion in Bangla.

3.3.2 Tools for Data Collection

An observation protocol (Appendix 2) was used to collect data from the observations of teaching of reading lessons and from the assessment activities performed in the classrooms. This observation protocol was devised based on the observation protocol prepared and used by the School of Education, University of Nottingham, Malaysia Campus (Appendix 5). Happenings other than included in the protocol were also noted down in the open space of the protocol. A set of semi-structured questions (Appendix 3) was prepared for interviewing the participating teachers. One form called 'Teacher Information Form' (Appendix 4) was prepared to collect the teachers' personal and job related information. Some questions arose in the mind of the researcher when he was observing the teaching sessions of the teachers. The researcher noted down the queries for asking during the interviews with the observed teacher participants. The list of questions which arose during teaching observations can be seen towards the end of the Appendix 3; and those questions were asked during the interviews with the observed teachers. There was a set of FGD prompt questions (Appendix 6) covering areas such as language skills; English reading skill teaching and assessment; methods of teaching; resources used in reading skill teaching and assessment; and so on. When the situation dictated, questions or areas other than those mentioned were also discussed with the respondents. Moreover, an interview schedule was prepared to interview the curriculum specialist and the teacher educator (Appendix 7).

3.4 Data Collection Procedure

There are established ways of data collection in a qualitative research and the researcher honestly followed those procedures. The participants were observed from January to October 2017. Each of the participants was observed four or more times during teaching in those 10 months. They were also observed before and after they taught, even when they were not in the classrooms to check what they did before and after the classes as Denzin and Lincoln (2003b) have asserted that qualitative researchers have to keep an eye on the participants and the surroundings. The initial plan of the researcher was to observe the participants from January 2017 to December 2017 but it was not possible because of the year-final, Junior School Certificate (JSC), and Test Examinations. Regular teaching activities remained suspended or were disturbed during those two months. Recurrent visits and classroom teaching observations, observing and talking before and after the teachings provided the researcher with the opportunities to notice what the teachers did, how they did, and why they did something. The researcher kept on observing, noting down what he observed as per the time schedule previously agreed in consultation with the participants. They provided the researcher with their class routine and the probable topic they would teach on a particular day. The researcher used to reach the schools at least ten minutes before the scheduled classes on the routine. The researcher used to sit somewhere in the Teachers' Common Room; in most cases the researcher used to sit close to the participants; observing informally; talking about personal and academic matters; and noticing what they did as part of preparation before the class. Sometimes, it was not possible to observe what they did before and after the classes as they reached the schools late; and in some cases, they had to go from one class to another. That is, after finishing a class, teachers had to enter into another class. As a

result it was not possible, in all cases, to observe what they did before and after a particular session.

When possible, the researcher used to go to the class with the teacher, sit at a back bench or desk from where he could observe the whole class without creating the least disturbance. On the very first day, the teacher would tell the students who the researcher was and the purpose of his observation. The researcher recorded the activities of the teachers and the students; wrote about the classroom environment and setting; and recorded other observed things and happenings in the observation protocol. The researcher thanked the students as well as the teacher and left the classroom with the teachers.

Alongside collecting data through interviews, observations, FGDs, and document analysis, the researcher wrote analytic memos throughout the fieldwork. Analytical memos are the notes and the researcher's analysis of what he experienced. Analytic memos contain the story and history of what the researcher has learnt throughout the study. Analytic memos are written during and after the data collection; and during writing of the analytic memos, the findings of the study come to the surface. Analytic memos were written as the memos were expected to give the researcher a logical story of the total study and the findings of the research.

3.4.1 Conducting Semi-structured Interviews

An interview timetable was fixed in consultation with the participants individually although the researcher had to change the timetable for unavoidable reasons such as a participant's falling ill and another one's urgent leave for family matters. Apart from the mentioned incidents, everything went as per the timetable set earlier. The teacher participants were formally interviewed using the interview schedule (Appendix 3) just

after the last observation of a participant was over. In someone's case, the interview happened after the penultimate observation of teaching. Along with other questions which covered all the research questions (Section A of the interview schedule), the interview schedule contained those questions which arose during the observations (Section B of the interview schedule). Those questions which came to the surface during observations were asked as probing questions along with other questions in section A of the interview schedule (Appendix 3). The after-observation interviews with the participants helped the researcher to learn through asking questions about what they did; why they did something in a particular way; why they did not do something in a way as was suggested in the curriculum; and how things could be done differently; and so on (Appendix 3). The interviews and the observations created opportunities for the researcher to cross-check what the participants did during teaching and what they said in the interviews. Although the interview time was decided to be 20 minutes each, two of the interviewees took around 30 minutes to finish. The answers of the interviewees were written beside the interview questions briefly and afterwards, they were elaborated and transcribed. Finally, the transcribed interviews were given to the concerned interviewees for getting checked if the researcher had included exactly what they had talked about or for getting inserted if anything was left out inadvertently.

The researcher feels the need to mention that he corrected the grammatical mistakes identified in the interviews if there was a chance to misunderstand what the participants said. Other mistakes which did not hamper understanding were kept as they were.

3.4.2 Interviewing the Curriculum Specialist and the Teacher Educator

With a view to exploring the views of a Curriculum Specialist from the NCTB and an English language teacher educator, the researcher interviewed them individually. Those two respondents were interviewed as they were involved in developing the curriculum, writing the textbooks, and in providing training to the teachers. It was considered important to know what the Curriculum Specialist as well as the teacher educator thought about the English reading skill teaching and assessment in secondary schools in Bangladesh.

The researcher contacted them over phone, told them about the research project in detail, and requested them to take part in the study. The Curriculum Specialist and the teacher educator agreed and the researcher made appointment with them for the proposed interviews. Time, date, and place was fixed for the interviews and the researcher interviewed the Curriculum Specialist and the teacher educator with the semi-structure interview schedule (Appendix 7) at the pre-fixed date, time, and place.

3.4.3 Class Teaching Observation

In order to get an inner view of the reading-teaching classrooms, the researcher observed four or more sessions of each of the four participants. It was negotiated with the participants as well as the head teachers of the two schools when and how the researcher would observe the classes. It was decided that, the researcher would go to each of the schools every alternative day. Additionally, the researcher used to talk to the teachers over phone at night before the day of visits to check whether the schools would be in session or not; if the participating teachers would be present in schools or not; and if the schools had any programme that would disrupt the normal activities of

the schools. It was difficult for the researcher to manage to observe more than four teaching sessions because of class tests, sports, JSC (Junior School Certificate) examinations; PEC (Primary Education Completion) examination; half-yearly examinations; and the SSC examinations. There were some other occasions such as inclement weather; cultural programme of the schools; hit for annual sports; the teacher was on leave; teacher could not come in time; and so on. And if the researcher missed one class of a teacher, he had to wait for another week to find a class to observe. Before entering into the classrooms, the researcher used to talk to the teachers about what they were going to teach; how they would teach the lesson; and the researcher used to sit at a back bench observing the class activities without influencing the normal class activities. The observation protocol was used by the researcher and additionally, he used to note down points that were not mentioned in the protocol. And after the session, the researcher used to hold a small talk about the performed activities. Then the observation field-notes were developed through reading again and again, added the information that seemed to have missed during the observations, edited the field-notes again and again before it was fully developed.

3.4.4 Conducting Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

Towards the end of the visits to the schools observing and interviewing teachers, the FGDs were conducted in four slots with 10 student participants from classes nine and ten of each school. The participants were selected through lottery so that every student had an equal chance to be included in the FGDs. All the roll numbers from each class were written in pieces of paper; jumbled them up in a plastic box; got the pieces of paper picked up one by one by a student; and when the number of students were 10, the lottery process was over. Then the selected participants were taken to a solitary place and the discussion begun. The researcher himself took part in the discussion;

and he himself and a trained assistant recorded the discussions with the student participants. The areas covered in the FGDs can be found in Appendix 6. Then after each discussion, the discussion notes were transcribed and read several times over time to develop it.

3.4.5 Document Analysis

According to Bogdan and Biklen (2007) and Strauss (2003), documents are private and official papers prepared for personal purposes or for public dissemination. In this study, the National Curriculum (NCTB, 2012a), the *English for Today* (NCTB, 2012b) and the *English Grammar and Composition* (NCTB, 2016) books, Teacher's Curriculum Guide (TCG) (NCTB, 2017), Guidelines for the Test Setters and Markers for English (Appendix 10), and a test (Appendix 9) used in an internal examination of one the study schools were analysed since all the mentioned documents have direct relation with English reading skill teaching and assessment at secondary level of education in Bangladesh. Transcripts of meetings, court proceedings, diaries, letters, census statistics, etc., can be considered as documents in qualitative research (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Creswell, 2009). Document analysis is a qualitative research method and it is very important since the documents provide a qualitative researcher with additional information which can speak for or against otherwise collected data.

3.5 Data Analysis

According to Bogdan and Biklen (2007), data analysis is a systematic process for searching and arranging the interview transcripts, observation field-notes, FGD transcripts, and other text materials that enables the researcher to come up with the findings. Besides, analysis is working with data to manage and break them into manageable units; coding and synthesising them; and searching for patterns. On the

other hand, data interpretation refers to developing ideas about the findings and relating them to existing literature, broader concerns, and concepts. Taylor and Bogdan (1998) state that qualitative data analysis is not a mechanical process; it involves inductive reasoning, and theorising. First of all, the researcher read and re-read the transcribed interview data and observation field-notes in order to internalise the data through reflecting on them. After reading the interview and the observation data several times, the researcher developed a coding system, underlining the text in different colours and putting the codes in the margins. Bazeley (2013, p.125) claims, "Coding provides a means of purposefully managing, locating, identifying, sifting, sorting, and querying data". The researcher presented the data tool-wise in Chapter Four under some themes related to the research questions. The data matching no category were put into a separate category because qualitative data analysis is a kind of search for types, classes, sequences, processes, patterns, and so on (Seidel, 1998) and labeling data with codes enables the researcher to sift out what the data are saying (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). As suggested by Bogdan and Biklen (2007), the researcher put the similar coded data into categories, which was developed around the research questions. Then the researcher tried to find links between the codes. As cited earlier, the qualitative data analysis is not linear; it is always like going back and forth relating things, events, and themes. Then after a lot of pondering over those things of interest, they were put into a logical order in the report. Data related to each research question were brought together to extract the findings of the study.

3.6 Presentation of Findings

The researcher presented the findings under the themes of the research questions because qualitative researchers use analytic induction strategies to present the findings (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). Themes emerged during

transcription of the interviews; writing, re-writing, and editing of the observation field-notes; documents analysis; and composing the FGD data. Alternatively, the findings could also be presented under the interview questions because the questions are associated with some themes (Chung, 2009). In presenting the findings, the researcher narrated; supported with quotes from the participants; triangulated data collected from different sources; and the researcher gave his own reasoned interpretation. The data collected from different sources were triangulated to make the findings more convincing to the readers as in social science research, triangulation is necessary 'to convey the idea that to establish a fact you need more than one source of information' (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 115). Finally, the findings were interpreted through relating to the current literature in chapter 5 named Findings and Discussion.

3.7 Rigour and Trustworthiness

Lichtman (2006) states that rigour and trustworthiness are issues which are related to the methodology of research; research design; engagement of the researcher in data collection; data processing and data analysis; validity and reliability of the data or findings; and ethical matters. To be specific, trustworthiness includes rapport, safety, honour, and commitment (Harrison et. al., 2001). Rigour protects the researcher against bias and enhances reliability of the findings. In other words, rigour measures the degree of trustworthiness of the findings of the research. To be believed by the readers, the researcher has to maintain rigour through systematic and conscious design of the research; truthful data collection; careful analysis; and interpretation of the data with reference to the existing literature. Moreover, credibility of the findings can be increased through describing in detail the research methods and data analysis; data analysis process; and informing the readers what the researcher learnt all the way through the research journey (Harrison et al., 2001).

Lacey and Luff (2007) claim that it is important to give a sense to the readers that the qualitative data collection, and data analysis was rigorous in order to answer the criticism against qualitative research. Qualitative researchers have to prove through planning, data collection, and data analysis that the results of the study are not unreliable. According to Lacey and Luff (2007), choosing appropriate research methods; preparing data collection tools; observing the subjects without bias; sharing their ideas in an unthreatening environment; administering the study appropriately; coding and categorising the data; maintaining rigour and trustworthiness are important issues in qualitative research.

3.8 Ethical Issues

Being aware of the ethical issues is very important in any research especially in qualitative research project. Being ethical in social science research is to conform to the acceptable professional practices (Banda & Kalimaposo, 2017). It is natural that cultural and moral-standard differences between the researcher and the subjects can be challenging. In such a case, the researcher has to convince the participants through talks about what ethical standard would be maintained throughout the research project implementation process.

It is a culture to inform the participants of the research project in detail through a Letter of Consent (Appendix 1) and to have it duly signed by the participants. In the current study, the participants were convinced by the assurance that the data collected would only be used for the study purpose; confidentiality of the data and anonymity of the participants would be strictly maintained; and then the participants happily agreed to take part in the research project and put their signatures in the Letter of Consent (Appendix 1). Glesne and Peshkin (1993) point out that written consent

could never ensure a symmetrical relationship between the researcher and the participants, but the consent paper signing could at least contribute to the empowering of the participants. The researcher maintained confidentiality regarding the data; the names of the participants; and the names of the participating schools through assigning pseudonyms to the participating teachers as T1, T2, T3, and T4, and to schools as A and B respectively.

Although the participants and schools could not be identified in any reporting of the study, the researcher was aware of the fact that a limited number of people may be able to identify some of the participants from their descriptions due to a small number of participating teachers and schools. However, as the number of secondary schools in Dhaka district was 456 and the number of teachers was 9792 (BANBEIS, 2010), it would be difficult and in some cases impossible to identify the participants as well the schools. Electronic data were kept secured by storing in a password-protected personal computer and the hard copies of the field notes, FGDs, and the interviews were put in a locked storage.

Moreover, the researcher was aware of the power relations and he never put any pressure on the participants. Also, the participants were reassured of their right to withdraw at any stage of the research without showing any cause. The researcher shared his power with the participants by putting them in the position of specialists who knew much more than the researcher about the work the participants were performing; and they were the sources of information making the researcher knowledgeable about the reading skill teaching and assessment in the secondary schools of Bangladesh as well as the challenges teachers faced in teaching and assessing the English reading skill. The researcher strictly avoided any deception; described what he was going to do on a particular day; and sought their permission

before starting the research related activities. No cultural problem arose as the researcher himself was a member of that society and as a Teacher Educator, the researcher was familiar with the culture of the secondary schools in Bangladesh. Moreover, the researcher taught in a government and a non-government schools for five years which gave him the status of an insider researcher.

Other ethical issues such as receiving the head teachers' permission was carefully done before the researcher talked to the participants. The researcher informed the head teachers why he would observe the teachers and their teaching sessions; interview the teachers; and why and how the researcher would conduct the FGDs with students. Banda and Kalimaposo (2017) have alleged that ethical behaviour in social science research is so important that if a researcher has dis-reputation for unethical conducts, they would soon lose access to the participants as well as to the organisations the participants work in.

3.9 Conclusion

In every research project, especially in a qualitative research project, the researcher has to clearly state who the participants of the study are and where they are selected from; why and how they have been selected; what methodology, methods, and tools were used to collect data and why that methodology and the methods were chosen; data processing and analysing procedures; ethical issues; rigour and trustworthiness; and what measures were taken to make the findings credible to the readers. The current study was a qualitative research in which the four English teachers from the two secondary schools in Dhaka city; a Curriculum Specialist from the NCTB and a teacher educator from Teachers' Training College, Dhaka were interviewed with two separate interview schedules (Appendices 3 & 7 respectively); the four English

teachers' teaching sessions were observed using an observation protocol (Appendix 2); and four FGDs with 40 students in four equal groups were conducted (Appendix 6). This chapter, Chapter Three, narrated in detail how the data were collected, processed, and analysed. Moreover, this chapter describes clearly how the ethical matters were handled and the credibility of the findings were ensured. It was believed that the readers would find it easier to understand the research process, data processing, and the whole research report.

Chapter Four: Analysis of Data

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher presents the analysis of the data. The researcher analyses the data into generative themes and the themes are described individually as findings. As stated in Chapter Three, data analysis involves working with the data, organising them, breaking them into manageable units, coding them, synthesising them, and searching for patterns (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). The current study, *Teaching and Assessment of English Reading Skill at Secondary Level in Bangladesh: Practices and Challenges*, tries to explore secondary English teachers' and students' understanding of English reading skill; strategies used in teaching English reading skill; resources teachers use in teaching and assessing English reading skill; reading skill assessment practices in schools; the barriers in teaching and assessment of reading; and the ways to improve the teaching and assessment of English reading skill in secondary schools of Bangladesh.

It is mentioned in Chapter Three that, this qualitative study employs interviews with four secondary English teachers, one Curriculum Specialist and one teacher educator; observation of reading teaching sessions and formative assessment of those four teachers; and FGD with four groups of students from two schools each group consisted of 10 students. Moreover documents such as the English curriculum (NCTB, 2012a), *English for Today* (NCTB, 2012b), *English Grammar and Composition* (NCTB, 2016), TCG (NCTB, 2017) have been analysed to check what has been suggested regarding teaching and assessment of reading. The data collected

through interviews and FGDs have been transcribed; field-notes developed; teaching of reading and assessment-related data from the mentioned documents have been summarised. Creswell (2009) claims that qualitative data is usually text, not numbers or figures. The data a qualitative researcher analyses is text; and that text is actually the transcripts of interviews or the verbatim of the participants; the transcripts of the FGDs; and the observation field-notes. Patton (2002) asserts that qualitative data analysis is a way how a researcher understands what participants really think, feel or do in some situations or in a particular point of time.

Text analysis is viewed as hermeneutic by some qualitative researchers because in this perspective, a researcher views the transcripts as interpretation that can never be judged as true or false. From the hermeneutic perspective, Creswell (2009) asserts that a researcher constructs 'reality' with their own interpretations of the text provided by the research participants; of course, other researchers with different background could come with different conclusions. However, during data analysis, a researcher has to code the data based on themes and then the similar codes are categorised based on the broader themes which are evident in research questions or objectives (Li & Seale, 2007).

Relevant documents such as *English for Today* book (NCTB, 2012b), *Teacher's Curriculum Guide* (NCTB, 2016), test (question paper) used in school examinations (Appendix 9); the National Curriculum (NCTB, 1995, 2012a); and the Guidelines for Question Setters and Markers for English (Appendix 10) analysis provided the researcher with clues that helped make meaning of the data provided by the participants.

In this chapter, the researcher analyses the data tool-wise and then searches for the emerging findings. In presenting the findings, the researcher narrates; supports with quotes from the participants; identifies similar and contrasting data collected from different sources using different tools for triangulation in the next chapter; and gives the researcher's own reasoned interpretation. The findings of the study have been discussed relating to the current literature and presented in the next chapter, Chapter Five, called Summary and Discussion of the Findings. The interview and the FGD responses are slightly modified in consultation with the interviewees and the participants of the FGDs in order to make sense of their statements, if it was necessary; and the major grammatical mistakes have been corrected in consultation with the participants in order to make a clear sense of the data.

The present study is a qualitative research; and for that reason, the researcher relies chiefly on primary data. Although the researcher starts fieldwork with observation, data analysis starts with semi-structured interviews. After collecting and analysising the primary data, the researcher compares what the participants do with what the documents say. That is why, the document analysis data have been analysed and placed towards the end of this chapter in section 4.6 and its sub-sections. Data collected through different methods and tools have been analysed tool-wise in the following sections and the sub-sections:

4.2 Interview with English Teachers

As stated in Chapter Three, section 3.2.1 that, interviewing the participants is an important method in qualitative research (Willis, 2008). The four English teachers who were the participants of the study have been interviewed during the time from January 2017 to October 2017 as per the schedule made in consultation with the

participants and as per the agreement with the participants as well as the head teachers of the selected schools. The researcher started the field work with observations of the classroom teaching and assessment of English reading skill and after completion of the second, third or the fourth round of observations, the researcher interviews the English teachers. From the interviews, the world-views of teachers regarding teaching and assessment of English reading skill emerged. Teachers' views regarding teaching of English reading are presented below:

4.2.1 Teachers' Understanding of English Reading

In analysing the interviews of the four participating teachers, the world views of the teachers regarding reading are revealed. Most teachers understand reading as reading out and clarifying by the teachers; as correcting pronunciations of students; and attaining fluency in reading. T2 claims that reading is reading aloud by the students with correct pronunciation, stress, and intonation. For example, T2 claims:

> Reading is reading aloud something with correct pronunciation, stress, and intonation. Students can develop English reading skill by reading essays and novels aloud. Very often I engage my students in reading aloud so that they can read better.

Similar response is provided by T3. According to T3, reading is fluency in reading; how faster students can read is very important to him. He also believes that the aim of reading is correcting pronunciation, stress, and intonation. T3 claims:

> I engage students in reading aloud in some classes and in silent reading in some other classes. I teach them the word meaning because the aim of reading is learning the difficult words. I write the difficult (!) words in the black board and provide the Bangla meaning on the right hand side.

T3 and T4 are from the same school and T4's perception of reading is similar to that of T3. According to T4, "The purpose of teaching of reading is to help students to

acquire fluency, correct pronunciation. I ask students to read aloud so that I can correct pronunciations".

However, T1 seems to have different understanding of reading and reading skill teaching; how to develop students' reading skill; and why English reading skill is important. Although T1 and T2 teach in the same school, T1 possesses improved understanding of reading. T1 asserts that reading is understanding the intension of the text and sometimes to add meaning to the text. T1's interview transcript is as follows:

> Reading means understanding a piece of text. The main purpose of reading is comprehension; we try to understand the intention of the writer through reading the text. Sometimes a reader has to add meaning to the text based on our previous knowledge, experiences, understanding, and based on the context.

The researcher has, in this section, shown that most of the teachers have misconceptions about reading. The verbatim of teachers T2, T3, and T4 proves that they do not have clear understanding of what reading actually means. Reading to them is reading out and clarifying the text by the teacher; being fluent in reading; learning the new vocabulary; and practicing pronunciation, stress, and intonation. This misunderstanding or superficial understanding of reading might have been generated from the insufficient training of the teachers and lack of pedagogical education such as B.Ed., Dip-in-Ed., M.Ed., etc. However, one teacher, T1's perception about reading is much better than others and her understanding is almost similar to that of Chowdhury and Karim (2014), Cook (1996), Ur (2011), and Williams (1992) who consider reading as comprehending the text. T1's improved understanding of English reading might be because of her sincere participation in the training sessions; proactive and voluntary participation in extracurricular activities such as organising debates, running English Language Club, sharing related teaching-learning issues with colleagues; and browsing the Internet (See section 3.3.1).

The following section, section 4.2.2, discusses the strategies teachers employ to teach reading skill in secondary schools of Bangladesh.

4.2.2 Strategies Used in Teaching of Reading

Every teacher has their own strategies of teaching or dealing with a particular skill. However, Bangladesh secondary curriculum advocates for communicative language teaching (CLT) approach (NCTB, 1995, 2012a) to teaching English. *English for Today* (NCTB, 2012b) and the *English Grammar and Composition* (NCTB, 2016) books have been designed incorporating many opportunities for language skills practices in an integrated way so that learners can acquire all the four skills of English simultaneously. The learning outcomes are provided there at the beginning of every unit so that the teachers can focus on those learning outcomes and choose teaching strategies with a view to achieving the learning outcomes. There are activities that support the realisation of the set learning outcomes. Every lesson of the English for Today book has been planned keeping in mind the teaching strategies.

However, all the four teachers' reading teaching strategies did not comply with the curriculum guidelines as well as textbook instructions. All the teachers' teaching strategies were similar although T1 had better ideas about reading skill teaching and assessment. Although all the four participants taught English reading skill in a traditional way, T1 had ideas to teach English reading in the way as prescribed in the National Curriculum (NCTB, 2012a). Here traditional way means Grammar Translation Method (GTM) where teachers read out the text and clarify the meaning.

The interview transcripts of most of the teachers reveal that they use the Grammat Translation Method in teaching English. In Grammar Translation Method, teachers

dominate the classroom and the students remain almost inactive. For example, T2 reports in her interview:

> First of all, I read out the text and clarify it in Bangla, and then ask students to read out the text one by one loudly (aloud). After four or five students have finished reading loudly (aloud), I stop them and solve the exercise and tell the students to copy the answers.

Again T2 asserts, "I do not exploit section A of the lessons, if I teach from the *English for Today* book, because it is unimportant. And I also do not organise any after reading (post-reading) activities".

T3 informs the researcher that he is not aware of the curriculum stated three stages in teaching of reading. He claims that he reads out the text in front of the students and explains in Bangla or in English and he teaches the new words. The following excerpt from the interview transcript of T3 is a proof of what is claimed about T3's understanding of reading. T3 claims:

> I do not follow any stages of reading; actually I am not aware of them. I read out the text in front of the students and they listen to me carefully; and I explain the text and teach vocabulary, solve the exercises; and the students copy them in notebooks for memorisation.

The above excerpts are genuine proofs of T2's and T3's inclination towards Grammar Translation Method.

Alike T2 and T3, T4, too, teachers English reading applying the Grammar Translation Method and she plays the major roles in the teaching-learning process. Like other two teachers, she also reads out and clarifies the text to the students; teaches the word meaning, and correct students' pronunciation. For instance, T4 alleges:

> I read out the text loudly (aloud); tell the meanings of the difficult words; correct pronunciation breaking the words into syllables; and at last write the answers of the questions in the blackboard; solve other problems such as gap-filling, matching, information transfer, rearranging sentences, etc. activities on the board. Students copy them and read at home for exam.

Among the four teachers, T1 possesses different views regarding the teaching strategies. In most cases, she claims, she follows the three stages in teaching of

reading as she believes that if taught following the three stages, students can achieve better reading skill. The following quotation from her interview transcript proves that she knows about the curriculum suggested 3 stages of teaching of reading but does not always follow the guidelines regarding teaching of reading skill to her students. She states:

> In pre-reading-activities, I prepare the students for the reading; in while-reading stage, I monitor and help the students if they ask for it; and in the post-reading stage, I check their understanding through some questions, gap-filling, etc. That is the theoretical side of teaching English reading skill but sometimes I have to read out and clarify the text in Bangla because of my students' demand.

It is evident from the teachers' interviews that three of the four participants do not have clear knowledge of the three stages (NCTB, 1995 & 2012a; Rogers, 2005a, 2005b, & 2005c; Williams, 1992) regarding teaching of reading. The lack of understanding of the three stages might be because of the lack of professional degrees or relevant training. On the other hand, T1 has clear ideas about the three stages although she cannot always stick to the three stages in teaching of reading because of students' demand to read out and clarify the texts in Bangla. Alongside the students' demand, T1's falling back to the Grammar Translation Method might be because her long practices or she might not be interested to follow the three stages alone because other teachers of her school follow the traditional Grammar Translation Method instead of CLT.

4.2.3 Resources Used in Teaching English Reading

Interviews with the participating teachers reveal that teachers use commercially produced materials which are not approved by the government. The textbooks are designed in a way that they contain activities that help develop the four language

skills including reading. That teachers do not use the prescribed textbook in teaching of reading is clear in the interviews with the teachers. Teachers clim that students are not interested to use the NCTB-provided books as no questions are directly set from those books. T2's interview transcript shows that she does not use the *English for Today* (NCTB, 2012b), and the *English Grammar and Composition* (NCTB, 2016) books in teaching English. T2 asserts, "I use the *Advanced Learner's Communicative English Grammar & Composition with Model Questions* (Chowdhury & Hossain, 2017) which contained activities similar to those available in *English for Today* and the *English Grammar and Composition* books".

On the other hand, T3 claims in the interview that the guidebooks and the Test Papers are easy to use as those books contain the word meanings and other exercises solved. She affirms, "The guidebooks contain the lessons of the textbooks and have Bangla translation of the passages, Bangla clarifications of the texts, word meanings in Bangla, answers to all the questions, and contain solutions to all the exercises".

T4 and T3 teach in the same school and both of them possess similar beliefs. T4 also confirms like T3 that, the guidebooks and the Test Papers are beneficial as they contain many exercise and their solutions. T4 claims that both teachers and students can use those books without efforts as they have the solutions to the textbook exercises; word meanings, etc. T4 asserts, "I always teach using the guidebooks and the Test Papers as questions in the public exams are set from those books".

Moreover, she informs the researcher that she does neither have the *English for Today* nor the *English Grammar and Composition* books developed by the NCTB for use in the classroom teaching. T4 was saying during interview, "I need to collect the books." She further claims that it is easier for her to teach using the commercially produced

books as the books contain the solutions to the exercises of the textbooks, and those guidebooks and the Test Papers have some extra exercises and activities which could be used as readymade resources.

Moreover, alongside those benefits, T4 claims that there is pressure on the English teachers from the publishing houses to use those books and to tell students to buy those books. T4 alleges:

> There is a kind of pressure on us (the English teachers) from the head teachers as well as the publishing houses to use those materials. The publishers give cash or gifts to the head teachers to select their books. However, there was a government ban on the use of the guidebooks and notebooks. Nobody cares for the ban.

T1 claims that she likes the *English for Today* and the *English Grammar and Translation* books as lessons in those books are easy to use for communicative or participatory way of teaching and learning. She confesses that the NCTB-produced books have activities that address the four language skills. However, she confesses that they do not put that emphasis on the skills. T1 states:

> Although I like the textbooks, sometimes I use the commercially produced materials. I use them as support materials, there is a lot of exercises in those books for students to practise. Moreover, there is also a pressure from the students to use those guide books as no question is directly set from the NCTB-produced textbooks.

The above quotations from the interview transcripts of all the four teachers show that all of them use commercially produced materials although textbooks are provided free of cost to each and every student. The teachers' and the students' preference for the guidebooks and the notebooks might be because teachers do not have to take extra preparation before teaching if they use the guidebooks containing the solved exercises of the *English for Today* book and some more exercises for students to practise; or it might be they are compelled by the school authority to use them; or it might be due to

lack of or no supervision to check if the teachers and the students are using the government approved materials or not.

4.2.4 English Reading Skill Assessment in Schools

Assessment culture in an education system usually dictates the classroom practices (Brown, 2004; Biggs & Tang, 2011). It is alleged that reading skill is not practised properly and with added importance (Ebrahim, 2017) as this skill is assessed properly neither in continuous assessment (CA) nor in the internal (half-yearly and year-final) examinations although Inbar-Lourie (2008) reports that classroom assessment promotes better learning. Although schools organise summative assessment a year, half-yearly in the middle of the year and the year-final examinations towards the end of the year, reading skill assessment does not get importance there. Regarding the summative assessment of reading, all the four teachers claim that they perform assessment of learning (AoL) in reading in half-yearly and year-final examinations but the way they perform the AoL is not as it should be or as per the curriculum guidelines. All the four teachers claim that, they perform CA during teaching of reading but the way the assessment activities are performed is not as is suggested in the curriculum (NCTB, 2012a). T2's interview transcript provided below is proof that their assessment practices are not as suggested in the said curriculum. T2 claims, "I tell students to read the text aloud one by one so that all in the classroom can hear. Then I know who of the students has performed better and who has not. I also judge students' speed of reading and pronunciation. Those are the activities I do in my CA".

T2 further claims regarding the AoL that she follows the Sample Question provided by the NCTB (Appendix 8) and follows the test items as suggested by the NCTB (Appendix 9). T2 assets:

> We conduct summative assessment of reading in the half-yearly and in the year-final examinations. We usually follow the structure of the tests (question papers) provided by the NCTB. There are three reading passages in each of those tests followed by different types of questions.

T3 fumbles for words when asked about CA and he hesitates to talk about continuous assessment mentioned in the National Curriculum (NCTB, 2012a). He says that he does not know anything about CA or continuous assessment and he does not perform any CA. He continues:

> What is CA? Actually, I do not perform any CA; CA is rare in my class! Of course we do it. Actually CA is what we do in the classroom. I teach; I talk; I advise; I ask questions; I write answers on the board; I teach word meaning; all these activities are CA.

T3 is so puzzled that it seems to the researcher that he hears the term CA or continuous assessment for the first time. Regarding the summative assessment of reading in the half-yearly and year-final examinations, he claims that summative assessment of reading is done properly. However, he cannot tell anything in detail.

T4's perception about CA and her knowledge about the curriculum expectations regarding CA and AoL is sound. She knows what is said in the curriculum regarding CA and AoL of reading. She claims:

> In order to assess students' reading, I ask them to read then answer the questions, say true or false, fill out gaps, etc. 5 marks are allotted for reading skill assessment and I give marks after testing their reading speed and pronunciation but this mark is not added to determine the final results of the students".

T1 further alleges regarding CA that she asks students questions during and after every activity but this she does not always do for giving grades to students; this is done so that she can give feedback to students; address the weaknesses in teaching and learning:

> Actually my school does not have provision to test reading skill during teaching. Reading skill is tested only in the half-yearly and in the school final

examinations. The tests (question papers) are prepared by us based on the instructions provided by the NCTB.

However, T1 is apparently noticed to be more methodical in assessing reading skill than other three participants. Her AoL complies with the guidelines provided in the National Curriculum (NCTB, 2012a). What T1 says in interview proves that she understands what assessment aims at. She asserts:

> CA is done to improve students' reading skill as well as to identify my weaknesses as a teacher; I can teach differently if a certain way of teaching is proved to be ineffective. I believe, CA is important but the school authority does not tell us to keep on assessing students' English reading skill continuously.

She continues that although she is aware of the nitty-gritty of assessment, she does not follow as nobody does those. She claims, "20 marks allotted for all the four language skills assessment in CA. Actually we do not do that; none of the English teachers practices CA as suggested in the curriculum". However, T1 claims that they do summative assessment as per the curriculum guidelines. She asserts:

> Students' improvement of reading skill is assessed on 40 marks in the half-yearly and final examinations. I prepare the tests (question paper) for the summative assessment following the curriculum guidelines and those tests are used in the school examinations. There are 3 pieces of text in each of the school test followed by some questions in the tests.

None of the four teachers perform CA as per the curriculum expectations; actually reading testing or assessment is neglected by the school authority or they are not aware at all. It also may be that the schools and the teachers do not want to take extra load of work that originates if CA is implemented. In some instances, teachers do not know what CA does mean although Inbar-Lourie (2008) asserts that CA promotes more learning than is possible through AoL. Teachers are not much aware of the CA probably because most of them do not have the opportunity to join the curriculum

dissemination training (see section 3.3.1). However, AoL or the summative assessment is performed as per the curriculum guidelines during the half-yearly and the year-final examinations. All the participants claim that they prepare the tests (question papers) for administering with the students during half-yearly and year-final examinations where reading skill is assessed on 40 marks. They claim that they follow the curriculum guidelines in setting the test items; they strictly follow the items provided in the sample test (question paper) which is attached at the back of the textbook (Appendix 8). T1's better understanding of the CA and conducting some activities of CA as per the curriculum guidelines might be because of her added interest in teaching and learning English language which is obvious in her eagerness and engagement in students' debate practices and in English Language Club; sharing educational ideas with colleagues; attending training sessions whenever she finds an opportunity; browsing the Internet; and participating in the curriculum dissemination training (see section 3.3.1).

4.2.5 Challenges of Teaching and Assessing Reading Skill

According to the participants, they faced some challenges in schools in teaching and assessing English reading skill. Some of the challenges are rooted with the teachers themselves; students' family edu-culture; motivation level of students; and assessment practices. The challenges of teaching and assessment of reading are evident in the transcripts of the teachers' interviews. It is evident from the teachers' interviews that teachers do not understand how to teach reading and some do not follow the strategies as suggested in the curriculum (NCTB, 2012a). Therefore, it is obvious that some issues are related to the teachers' way of teaching and level of understanding how reading functions. Teachers' wrong way of teaching is expressed in T2's interview, "I read out the text to the students, explain it for their better understanding, and then ask students

some oral questions. Students answer and I correct their answers if there is any mistake".

T2's claim regarding CA and summative assessment is as follows:

> I received CPD training organised by TQI-SEP about six years ago but I forgot what was said about assessment of reading. I am not sure how to implement CA because I was not invited to participate in the curriculum dissemination training organised by the NCTB. Formative assessment or the AoL is done in two examinations, half-yearly and year-final, as per the sample question attached at the back of the *English for Today* book.

It is clear from the verbatim of T2 that she has not clear idea of CA and summative assessment.

The serious allegation raised by T3 regarding teaching and assessment is that, her students are so weak in English that her students cannot read a piece of text. According to T3, her students are not also interested in practising reading. Students cannot be engaged in reading the text in section B of the *English for Today* lesson as no question is set from these reading texts. Her claim regarding assessment proves that she is not aware of the CA and AoL. T3 claims:

> We are not aware of the CA; we are not sure what curriculum expects from the teachers and the students. However, we test students' reading in the half-yearly and year-final examination. How to assess reading is given in the sample question attached to the textbook.

T3 talks about the attitudes of the parents regarding reading teaching and assessment and blames the parents for their faulty attitudes; parents and students work hard for better results ignoring the benefits of learning or achieving skills. T3 alleges:

> Most parents are not aware of the importance of reading skill and there is no culture of reading at their homes; they always press us for better results or grades. Parents and students are more interested in better results and less interested in reading, learning, and achieving reading skill. This results-oriented attitude is a challenge on the way to better teaching, learning, and assessment.

T3 further talks about the short time allotted in the routine for each period. She complains that 40 minutes is not enough to conduct a teaching session properly. The

school authority allotted 40 minutes for each class although the curriculum (NCTB, 2012a) declares every period to be of 60 minutes in single-shifted schools and 50 minutes in double-shifted schools. T3 claims, "I am not sure about the 60 or 50 minutes periods."

T4 does not have any training on teaching English. She puts more emphasis on accuracy of pronunciation and word meaning in teaching reading instead of putting emphasis on comprehension; she is not at all concerned about comprehending the text which is a good example of teachers' misconception about teaching of reading. She claims:

> I do not have B.Ed. and I do not have any training. I believe that I know enough to teach English to the school students. Actually, I do not clearly know how to teach and assess reading; nobody told me about the 3 stages of teaching and nobody told me about the strategies to be used in reading assessment.

T1 has different ideas about teaching and assessment of reading. She blames the lack of training for the deplorable reading teaching and assessment situation in secondary schools. Furthermore, she mentions large class size and workload of teachers. She alleges that she cannot take prior preparation as she has to teach in 4/5 classes a day. As there are 60 or more students in each class, it becomes difficult to take care of every individual student. T1 affirms:

> Although I have received some rounds of training, some of my colleagues who teach English in different classes have not received any training so far. We need training immediately to make a positive change in the teaching-learning and assessment situation in secondary schools.

T1 further talks about the inconsistencies in the curriculum regarding assessment. She maintains that they follow the assessment guidelines regarding summative assessment. However, the inclusion of three seen passages carrying 22 marks to test

reading skill of students is a bad decision, according to T1. She repeats that it is never possible to assess reading skill of students with a 'seen passage'. She asserts:

> How is it possible to test one's reading skill with a text that has been already read or taught? This is a great problem on the way to engaging students in extensive reading. They are not interested in anything that may not come in the exams.

T1 further claims that, most teachers do not have training that can help them to teaching and assess reading properly. Besides, there is no mechanism to supervise the teaching and learning to check if they are implementing the planned curriculum properly. The above analysis obviously sheds light to the challenges of teaching and assessment of reading. T2, T3, and T4's interview transcripts show that they are not familiar with the reading teaching strategies and assessment techniques. All the four teachers confess that they are not aware of the reading competencies set in the curriculum for the SSC passed students and they are not aware of the teaching and assessment methods and techniques suggested in the National Curriculum (NCTB, 2012a). This implies that the teachers need intensive training on teaching and assessment of English reading as suggested in the latest curriculum (NCTB, 2012a). However, repealing the culture of 'seen passage' from the curriculum may positively change the situation. Alongside insufficient or lack of training, lack of monitoring and supervision from the education authority might be another reason for teachers' not being conversant with the curriculum expectations regarding teaching and assessment of English reading.

4.2.6 Ways to Improve the Teaching and Assessment of Reading

The above sections from 4.1 to 4.2.5 show that the teaching and assessment of reading is not done properly following the curriculum guidelines. The participating teachers provide some suggestions from their experiences regarding how the reading skill

teaching-learning and assessment situation can be improved. First of all, all the participating teachers express the need of training enabling them to teach and assess reading properly. T1 stresses:

> We need training after a certain period of time to renew the ideas and to be familiar with the latest curriculum, modern methods and techniques of teaching as suggested in the curriculum; and the assessment strategies as planned in the curriculum. There should be plan what training a teacher would receive after how long time.

T1's plea for training is because her experiences say that although she has received some rounds of training, many of her colleagues do not have even B.Ed. degree which is very basic training for being a teacher. T1 further regrets regarding the supervision of teaching-learning activities by the right authority. T1 asserts:

> I have received the curriculum training 6 years back but nobody has so far come to check whether I have been implementing the training or not. On the other hand, as my colleagues have not received the training, they are not aware of the curriculum expectations. Therefore, providing training and supervising if the training is being implemented is most important to improve the situation.

Along with training, T2 added some more points about how to improve the reading teaching and assessment situation. Although there is CA in the curriculum, the teachers do not practise it properly. She asserts, "Although there is CA in the curriculum, we do not practise CA in our schools. We add the 20 marks allotted for CA without organising CA activities".

Other than CA, claims T2, that there is a 'seen passage' set in the summative examinations. This seen passage has become a black spot in the English reading teaching and assessment. She maintains:

> There is a 'seen passage' in the summative assessment of reading. This 'seen passage' culture should be repealed by the government for the sake of students' reading skill development. There needs a huge reform in the assessment system to bring a positive change.

T3 and T4 provide their suggestions focusing on comprehension of the text introducing extensive reading opportunities. There was a provision of some extra reading in the near past but this provision has been repealed. For that reason, students have lost an opportunity to form a good reading habit. T3 claims:

> I can learn from your talks with me that the main purpose of reading is comprehension and reading skill can be achieved through continuous practices. Therefore, teachers' thinking should be changed through training and motivational programmes so that they focus on student engagement and comprehension.

T4 does not have any training (see section 3.3.1) and she could not tell anything about the curriculum guidelines regarding teaching and assessment. However, she puts emphasis on training and creating opportunities for students for extensive reading. She emphasises:

> The school authority or the education authority should organise training for me and others who do not have training. Besides, books written in easy English that match students' interests should be available there in the school libraries. Motivational activities can also be started by the school authority to form reading habit of students.

It is mentioned earlier that two of the teachers do not have pedagogical education such as B.Ed., Di-in-Ed. Or M.Ed. and one teacher has no training (see section 3.3.1). All the four teachers suggest training on teaching of reading and assessment; two of the teachers suggest creating reading opportunities in the curriculum for students; and one teacher demands academic supervision from the higher authority to keep the teachers on track. Another suggestion was to change the assessment system since assessment system very often governs the classroom practices (Brown, 2004). Teachers' understanding of English reading skill teaching and assessment has been presented this section 4.2 and the Curriculum Specialist's and the teacher educator's views regarding teaching and assessment of English reading skill have been presented in section 4.3 below.

4.3 Interviews with a Curriculum Specialist and a Teacher Educator

As mentioned earlier in Chapter Three that one Curriculum Specialist and a teacher educator are interviewed with a semi-structured interview schedule (Appendix 7) in order to know what they think about the English reading teaching and assessment situation at secondary level of education in Bangladesh. The Curriculum Specialist and the teacher educator are important stakeholders in the process of curriculum development, textbook and TCG writing, and curriculum implementation. Through the talks with the Curriculum Specialist and the teacher educator, it was possible to unearth what they think about the current English reading teaching and assessment situation in Bangladesh. The interview data have been analysed and presented under two major heads, the Curriculum Specialist's views (4.3.1) and the teacher educator's views (4.3.2):

4.3.1 The Curriculum Specialist's Views

The Curriculum Specialist, who is engaged in developing the curriculum, writing the textbooks, the TCGs, and in the curriculum dissemination training, claims that most secondary teachers do not have clear understanding of reading and they employ the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) in teaching although CLT is the suggested approach to teaching English. To them, reading is reading aloud and reading is correcting students' English pronunciations; most of them do not believe that reading is strongly associated with comprehending the text. The Curriculum Specialist's views are presented in the following sections under the heads of teachers' and students' understanding of reading (4.3.1.1); strategies used in teaching of reading (4.3.1.2); materials used in teaching English reading skill (4.3.1.3); English reading skill assessment in schools (4.3.1.4); challenges of teaching and assessing English

reading skill (4.3.1.5); ways to improve English reading and assessment situation in schools (4.3.1.6).

4.3.1.1 Teachers' and Students' Understanding of Reading

The Curriculum Specialist alleges that most of the secondary English teachers and the students do not have proper understanding of reading. He claims, "Most teachers and students consider English as a knowledge-based or content-based subject. So, they teach a text so that students can memorise some pieces of information. They do not try to help students understand the text". He alleges:

> What most teachers and students in Bangladesh understand about reading is being faster in recitation with better pronunciation, stress, and intonation; and memorising some isolated pieces of information from a text. Some may remember the pieces of information from a text but may not be able to comprehend or internalise the whole text. This is the case with our secondary teachers and students. They do not want to agree that reading is associated with comprehension.

He claims that for helping students to understand the text, teachers must engage students in reading. He continues, "Reading is a skill and no skills can be achieved without continuous practices but teachers believe that, if they (teachers) do not explain the text, their students wouldn't understand". The Curriculum Specialist claims that this lack of understanding might have been originated from the lack of training of the teachers.

4.3.1.2 Strategies Used in Teaching of Reading

It is evident from the Curriculum Specialist's interview that most teachers at the secondary level use Grammar Translation Method (GTM) in teaching English although curriculum advocates for CLT. The Curriculum Specialist asserts that, those teachers who use GTM, never use the three stages in teaching of reading. He asserts that the secondary English teachers are not aware of the three stages in teaching of

reading. Most secondary teachers believe that English is a knowledge-based subject, not a skill-based subject. He claims:

> As teachers do not follow CLT in most cases, they do not follow the curriculum suggested three stages – pre-reading, while-reading, and post reading stages. And in most cases, teachers do all the activities which are supposed to be done by students and thus through personal reading or practices, they would achieve the reading skill.

The Curriculum Specialist further claims that the teachers have several rounds of training from government projects such as ELTIP, TQI-SEP, SEQAEP, NCTB and from non-government organisations such as BARC, EiA, the British Council, and so on. He maintains that although many teachers know about the CLT approaches, they do not use it in teaching; they love to teach using the GTM where students are kept almost inactive.

4.3.1.3 Materials Used in Teaching English Reading Skill

The Curriculum Specialist claims that the teachers do not exploit the benefits of the NCTB-produced materials so far as he knows. He claims, "We prepared two English textbooks for the secondary students. The books are *English for Today* and the *English Grammar and Composition*. Additionally, a TCG is prepared with a view to helping the teachers to teach the *English for Today* book effectively. He maintains that the TCG contains the main points of the curriculum guidelines as well as some exemplar lesson plans. The sad thing is that, the Curriculum Specialist claims, the teachers do not use those NCTB-produced materials; instead they use the commercially produced and marketed guidebooks and the Test Papers.

Although the English curriculum keeps provision for teachers to use resources other than provided in the textbooks, teachers use only the guidebooks and the Test Papers which do not have approval from the Ministry of Education, Bangladesh. On the

contrary, the Rapid Reader book which is supposed to form students' taste and habit of reading have been excluded from the curriculum for reasons unknown. He alleges:

> The sad thing is that, teachers do not use the NCTB-produced materials. Instead, they use the unapproved materials such as the guidebooks and the Test Papers. There was a book called Rapid Reader which was consisted of some famous stories in easy English by the eminent litterateurs of the world.

He regrets that the exclusion of those Rapid Readers from every class few years ago was a bad decision from the NCTB. "That was a suicidal decision from the part of the NCTB", he claims. He further asserts from his experiences gathered during the need analysis and the situation analysis for curriculum review that there is a good demand of those kinds of books called Rapid Readers among the students as well as the teachers. The Curriculum Specialist expresses his experiences in the following way:

> When I used to go to the schools for need and situation analysis before reviewing the curriculum, the teachers used to say that they would love to teach the stories of the Rapid Readers. Students also demanded such books containing famous stories of the world literature. It is not known to me why that Rapid Readers got excluded from the curriculum in the recent past.

The NCTB has not prescribed any other books for students to develop their reading habit. The Curriculum Specialist claims from his talks with the secondary English teachers during need and situation analysis organised for curriculum review that, individual students might read other English materials but there is almost no opportunity for the majority of the students to access to English reading materials. "Very few students might have the opportunity to and interested in reading the English dailies, novels, stories, other things in English" claims the Curriculum Specialist.

The Curriculum Specialist claims that reading enjoys a high status in the curriculum. 40 marks out of 100 have been allotted for reading skill. However, this importance is not reflected in the teaching and assessment of English reading. He alleges:

> There are 40 marks allotted for reading and the secondary English curriculum states that the learners would do reading for pleasure and comprehension; for enhancing reading habit, they will scan, skim, and infer meaning from context; they will analyse, interpret, evaluate, summarise, guess meaning, and plan about future course of action, ---" (NCTB 2012a, p. 78).

It is evident from the above data analysis that the NCTB-prepared reading materials are not being untilised in the secondary schools. Teachers' wrong ideas regarding reading skill development; and the absence of monitoring from the higher authority in order to check whether the planned curriculum is being implemented properly or not seems to be a major issue.

4.3.1.4 English Reading Skill Assessment in Schools

Regarding assessment of reading, the Curriculum Specialist claims that there are two kinds of assessment which include Continuous Assessment (CA) or assessment for learning (AfL) and summative assessment or assessment of learning (AoL). Alongside CA for which 20 marks has been allotted, there are two AoL tests in the middle of the academic year and another one is towards the end of the year. The Curriculum Specialist claims referring to the curriculum (NCTB, 2012a) that, the suggested approach to teaching is CLT and in CLT, students must practise and develop a skill; and teachers would continuously keep on assessing and providing feedback aiming at students' comprehension skill development. He asserts, "The curriculum advocates for the development of the four language skills through continuous practices but our teachers assess or test students' knowledge about the language; not the students' language use skills".

It is mentioned in section 4.3.1.3 that 40 marks are allotted for reading which indicates the importance of reading attached in the curriculum but at the implementation level, that much importance is not noticed.

The Curriculum Specialist alleges that, the teachers in schools are not on the right track in assessing reading and the way reading part of the test (question paper) is dealt with in the internal as well as SSC examinations is inappropriate. He asserts:

> It was a wrong decision from the part of the NCTB to set one 'seen' reading text from the *English for Today* book probably to compel the students to read the textbooks. It was a bad decision because reading skill, I mean, reading comprehension could never be tested with a piece of text which was taught to students or read by students earlier. It was a suicidal decision.

He further claims that the test score could never be valid as the score does not manifest the actual ability of the students. The sample test (question paper) attached at the back of the textbook (Appendix 8), shows that there were three reading passages in the question paper which altogether carried 22 marks. Out of 22 marks allotted for testing students' English reading skill, the seen passages, i.e., the texts that students studied earlier carry 22 marks.

The Curriculum Specialist further alleges that although reading is a skill, it was taught as a means of acquiring knowledge. Alternatively, it can be assumed that English is taught as a knowledge-based or content-based subject not as a skill-based subject. As a result, both the teachers and the students are not engaged in skill development and the teachers do not test skills of students. "Why will the teachers and students try to develop skills when skills are not tested?" questions the Curriculum Specialist. "If you do not disclose my name, I would tell you that there is a huge mismatch between the curriculum and the implementation process", alleges the Curriculum Specialist. "We talk about skills in the curriculum and test students' knowledge! Teachers do not

teach reading in a way where learners have opportunity to practise and develop reading skill", maintains the Curriculum Specialist. He further alleges that the teachers alone cannot be blamed for all those because assessment system dictates the classroom practices and as the assessment practices are faulty, the classroom practices regarding reading are not as stated in the curriculum. He suggests an immediate reform in the assessment system focusing on skill assessment.

The Curriculum Specialist suggests that the students would read the text silently for scanning, skimming, and inferring meaning from the context; and would interact with students and teachers sharing opinions in the post-reading stage. They are also supposed to do pre-, while-, and post-reading activities in every lesson on reading but he feels sorry to say that those activities suggested in the curriculum are absent from the teaching-learning activities in the classrooms.

Moreover, the teachers are not observed to focus on the understanding in CA and in the AoL. This might have happened as it is possible on the part of the students to pass the reading part of the test without achieving the comprehension skill. Sometimes, already-studied texts are set in the internal examinations and students write answers from their memory or answer questions just lifting sentences from the reading text.

4.3.1.5 Challenges of Teaching and Assessing English Reading Skill

The Curriculum Specialist mentions some major challenges on the way to bringing back reading teaching and assessment to right track. He identifies teaching style, implementation of CA and AoL, lack of training of teachers, and lack of monitoring as the major barriers to proper teaching and assessment of English reading. He claims:

> Teachers do not teach text for comprehension; they just help students to remember or memorise some information. That is, teaching style is not as prescribed in the curriculum. Teachers do not use the NCTB-produced

materials in teaching English; the curriculum suggested CA and AoL is not being properly done in the secondary schools.

This might be because the school authority is not aware of the curriculum expectations regarding teaching and assessment of English reading or they do not feel compulsion to follow the curriculum.

4.3.1.6 Ways to Improve English Reading and Assessment Situation in Schools

The Curriculum Specialist, alongside other matters, talks about how to improve the reading teaching and assessment situation in the country. He continues, "If we want to improve the situation, we need to change the reading teaching style and assessment strategy; provide sufficient training to teachers; and intensify monitoring and supervision". The Curriculum Specialist asserts that the curriculum suggested three stages of teaching of reading should be strictly followed and the CA as suggested in the curriculum must be implemented.

All the teachers must be brought to undergo rigorous training on teaching and assessment of English reading skill. If teachers engage students in different reading activities aiming at comprehension as suggested in the curriculum and mark them on the basis of their whole-hearted participation in the activities, the situation may improve, according to him. He claims, "There should be arrangement of training where the teachers will learn about the curriculum expectations regarding English reading and practise the techniques how to teach and test English reading skill". Additionally, we need to recruit some more English teachers and train them so that they can perform better. He asserts, "We need to recruit a good number of teachers skilled in English and train the existing teachers properly in order to get rid of the reading teaching and assessment situation". Then those trained teachers can take the

responsibility for improving the reading skill teaching and assessment situation including other skills of English language. He maintains:

> So far as I know, only from 10 to 15 percent English teachers are well qualified and well-trained to teach English competently; there are many schools where there is no teacher with English language or literature background and teachers recruited to teach other subjects teach English without any training in English or on curriculum.

Another issue the Curriculum Specialist raises is the lack of supervision and monitoring. He claims that no department or organisation is there to check if the curriculum is being implemented as per the curriculum guidelines or not. "There should be a provision of continuous monitoring and supervision followed by positive feedback", stresses the Curriculum Specialist.

It is observed from the above data that, the English teachers do not use the prescribed materials in teaching of reading; and the strategies employed in teaching and assessment of reading are not consistent with the curriculum guidelines. This might be because of the faulty testing system; lack of supervision and monitoring from the competent authority; and insufficient training of teachers. The English curriculum must be restructured in a way that will ensure the proper teaching and assessment of English reading skill in secondary schools of Bangladesh.

4.3.2 The Teacher Educator's Views

Teacher educators are closely associated with the secondary teachers for delivering of the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) courses and for providing in-service training to the practising and would-be secondary teachers. A teacher educator deals with the secondary teachers for their pedagogical education and in-service professional development training. The teacher educators have to know the secondary curriculum in detail; they are aware of the challenges of implementing the planned curriculum;

they know about the understanding and skill level of the teachers they deal with. As the English language teacher educators deal with the secondary English teachers, they know about them (English teachers) better than others. During interview with him, the teacher educator highlights the secondary teachers' and students' understanding of reading; strategies used in teaching of English reading skill; materials used in teaching and assessing reading; English reading skill assessment in schools; barriers teachers face in teaching and assessing English reading skill; and the possible ways to improve the reading teaching and assessment situation. Data related to the mentioned areas have been analysed in the following sections.

4.3.2.1 Teachers' and Students' Understanding of English Reading

The teacher educator strongly claims that most of the secondary English teachers and their students do not have clear understanding of reading. "Both the teachers and the students put more emphasis on pronunciation, word meaning, stress and intonation; most of them do not understand that the chief aim of reading is comprehension", asserts the teacher educator. A good number of the secondary English teachers, claims the teacher educator, believe that the secondary English course is designed to provide knowledge to the students; they do not or cannot understand that English at secondary level has been designed to enhance the comprehension skill of the students. The teacher educator asserts that English reading skill enjoys a high status in the curriculum. He claims:

> A total of 50 marks have been allotted for reading skill which constitutes 50% of the total marks in English. Again, there are 20 marks allotted in the English curriculum for CA or formative assessment. Because of lack in understanding of reading, teaching and assessment is not done properly.

The teacher educator claims that because of poor understanding of the curriculum suggested strategies of teaching and assessment of reading, the reading part of the curriculum is being poorly implemented.

The data placed above is evidence that the teachers do not follow the curriculum guidelines regarding teaching and assessment of reading. This may be because of teachers' lack of understanding of the curriculum suggested teaching and assessment strategies or may be teachers are not sincere enough to work hard for the reading skill development of the students. The views of the teacher educator regarding teaching strategies are presented below:

4.3.2.2 Strategies Used in Teaching of English Reading

The interview with the teacher educator reveals that the quality of English teachers in secondary schools is not so good. The teacher educator claims, "The overall quality of secondary English teachers is poor". He further maintains that only from 10 to 20 percent of the teachers may have the pedagogical knowledge and English language skills to teach English skillfully. Moreover, the training which the secondary English teachers receive cannot be implemented because of the assessment system prevailing in the country. The English teachers having Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) degree receive training on English language skills development approaches and techniques during B.Ed. programme through teaching practices (TP) in schools and simulation in the Teachers' Training Colleges. The teacher educators provide constructive feedback after observing the teaching sessions in TP and simulation, and the trainee teachers mend their teaching strategies and techniques based on the feedback by the teacher educators. He claims:

> During simulation and TP, the trainee teachers teach lessons from the English textbooks. We observe their teaching sessions and make notes to provide feedback at the end of the session. Sometimes we sit for one to one feedback and sometimes we sit in a group with the observed trainees and appreciate for their good parts of the teaching sessions, provide positive feedback for the weak sides of their teaching in general, and tell them about the alternatives ways to do things.

The teacher educator asserts that the contents they (the teacher educator) teach during B.Ed. and in-service training of practising English teachers and the would-be teachers include how to teach and assess listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills and their sub-skills; identifying and writing learning outcomes for every lesson; planning lessons and using teaching aids including technology in teaching; constructing a test for testing language skills; learning theories including behaviorism, constructivism, etc.; simulation of different skills teaching by the trainees with feedback from the English language teacher educators; pronunciation through the uses of phonetic symbols and the use of Cambridge Online Dictionary; different methods, approaches, and techniques of teaching a language; English curriculum, and so on. There are some motivational sessions focusing on the why language skills should be practiced. The trainee teachers have to follow the three stages in TP and simulation. Although they improve their teaching skills through practices and continuous corrections, when they go back to schools, the teachers do not follow the approaches to teaching as is suggested by the teacher educators. The teacher educator claims that there are some motivated teachers who try to implement the training received and the curriculum properly as is taught in the B.Ed. programme and in in-service training but they do not get cooperation from the colleagues and the school authority. The teacher educator's claim is as follows:

> The English teachers sometimes complain about the non-cooperation of the colleagues, the head teachers, and the students in implementing the techniques learnt in Teachers' Training Colleges. Sometimes some guardians complain that English teachers do not teach in the classroom if the teachers engage students in different language learning activities.

The teacher educator further alleges that, although some of the trainees are trained to develop four English language skills to students, they try to provide students with knowledge of English in schools.

Although some of the English teachers have Master in English Literature or English Language, and some have in-service training, their English language teaching and testing skills are not developed up to satisfactory level probably because they do not practise the curriculum suggested strategies in teaching and assessment of English reading. Although a small number of them are aware of the curriculum stated teaching strategies, probably they cannot materialise what they have written as colleagues, students, and sometimes the guardians pull them back.

4.3.2.3 Resources Used in Teaching and Assessing Reading

The teacher educator claims that when the English teachers come to the Teachers' Training Colleges for B.Ed. or for in-service training, the teacher educators try to provide the trainees with the knowledge and skills of teaching the four language skills and the strategies for language skills testing. They also try to convince the trainees to follow the curriculum and to use the NCTB-produced resources. The serious anomaly is that most of the teachers do not use the *English for Today* book and the TCGs in teaching English and there is no one to look after that. The worst thing is that, claims the teacher educator, most of the English teachers use the unauthorised, commercially produced guidebooks and the notebooks in the classrooms. Although the guidebooks and the notebooks are not approved by the education authority, teachers and the students use them extensively without considering the intension of the curriculum.

"As the teachers do not follow the textbooks and the TCG, there is little scope for the English teachers to apply the techniques learnt in the training sessions", asserts the teacher educator. The teacher educator expresses his discontent by saying:

> So far as I know from visits to schools and interactions with the English teachers, they do not use the NCTB provided *English for Today,* the *English Grammar and Composition* books, and the TCG in the teaching-learning and in assessment activities.

Although the teachers do not use the NCTB-produced textbooks, they use the guidebooks in teaching English. Those commercially produced and marketed guidebooks contain the lessons of the textbooks and solutions of all the exercises. The teacher educator states from his long 22 years of teacher education and teacher training experiences that the English teachers believe that those commercially produced guidebooks and the notebooks are useful as those books contain many exercises; Bangla meaning of words, phrases, and sentences; answers to the questions; gap-filling; matching, etc. As everything is ready in those books, it is easier for many English teachers to use those books in the classroom teaching as the teachers do not have to take prior preparation for the class.

The teacher educator states that, in order to ensure the use of the *English for Today* book by the students and the teachers, recently, the NCTB has created a provision to set two reading texts weighing 22 marks in the internal as well as in the SSC examinations from the *English for Today* book. That decision by the NCTB starts to be implemented from the SSC examinations held in 2018. "I am not sure whose purpose will be served with this suicidal decision because testing someone's reading skill with a piece of text that is taught and read earlier is ridiculous", alleges the teacher educator.

It is noted that teachers are not interested in using the NCTB-produced resources in teaching. It is a clear sign of the carelessness of the education authority because this situation cannot continue if the education authority looks after whether the textbooks and other resources produced by the NCTB are being utilised to materialised the planned curriculum or not.

4.3.2.4 English Reading Skill Assessment in Schools

The teacher educator claims that almost all the secondary English teachers are trained by one or more organisations such as ELTIP, TQI-SEP, SEQAEP, EiA, NCTB, the British Council, NAEM, BRAC, and so on. However, they do not assess students' reading in CA because most of them are not aware of them. According to the teacher educator, the teachers are not observed to be expert in assessing the reading skill as per the curriculum guidelines. However, states the teacher educator, marks have been redistributed against the four language skills. 50 marks have been allotted for reading and 50 for writing skill. "Additionally, 20 marks have been allotted for CA where some of the motivated and proactive teachers usually test listening and speaking skills of the students; in some other cases, CA is just ignored, maintains the teacher educator. He asserts:

> Teachers do not and sometimes cannot apply those techniques learnt from the training sessions because the prevailing assessment system does not fully support curriculum guidelines. Training tells them to focus on language skills practices and assessment, but skills are not tested in the public examinations such as JSC and SSC.

Some of the English teachers may have grammatical and linguistic competence, only a small number of them have pedagogical knowledge and skills, claims the teacher educator. He claims that most of the teachers do not know the curriculum expectations regarding reading skill teaching and assessment although they have received at least one round of training from different organisations as mentioned above. He additionally claims that, the teachers try to conduct the summative assessment of reading as per the curriculum guidelines although they do not have any specific training on how to assess English reading skill. The teacher educator admits that the teachers follow the test items as mentioned in the National Curriculum and in the

Guidelines for Question Setters and Markers for English (Appendix 10). The curriculum asks the teachers to use MCQs, True/False, Matching, Gap-filling, information transfer, open ended questions, substitution table, changing sentences, rearrangement of sentences, describing charts, graphs, pictures, etc. and the teachers use these items in the summative assessment of reading.

It is obvious that CA and summative assessment is not properly done in schools probably because the teachers are not skilled enough to assess reading skill or the school authority is not aware of what the curriculum dictates to do regarding assessment of reading or they are not under compulsion to do reading assessment. The colleagues and the head teachers do not support those who want to assess students' reading skill probably because those colleagues and the head teachers are not aware of the guidelines.

4.3.2.5 Barriers in Teaching and Assessing English Reading Skill

The teacher educator alleges that, the first barrier to teaching of reading is that, teachers are not aware of the curriculum suggested three stages. If these three stages are followed in teaching of reading, according to the teacher educator, students are engaged in reading practices which enhance their comprehension skill. The textbook has been developed following the three stages but most of the teachers do not use the textbooks. The second barrier is that, teachers are not familiar with the curriculum suggested assessment strategies. The teacher educator claims:

> Unless the teachers know about how to assess reading, how is it possible to assess reading properly? First of all, the English teachers should be trained properly so that the teachers can perform CA and summative assessment following the curriculum expectations

Additionally, the school or the higher authority does not pay attention to the teaching and assessment of English reading. None from the education authority is in charge of

looking after if the curriculum is being implemented properly or not. Another glitch is that, two seen passages carrying 22 marks are being set from the *English for Today* book. The teacher educator asserts that the provision of 'seen passages' must be abrogated as reading skill never be tested with a text already studied by the test taker.

From the above data, it is evident that the major barriers include teachers' ignorance of the three stages of reading teaching; teachers are not fully aware of the CA and summative assessment strategies; school or higher education authority is ignorant of the teaching and assessment of English reading probably because they are not familiar with the curriculum expectations. Moreover, no-monitoring and 'seen passages' are two other barriers to teaching and assessment of reading properly. This situation indicates that neither the English teachers nor the education authority is concerned about the assessment of reading English reading skill.

4.3.2.6 Ways to Improve Teaching and Assessment of Reading

"If we want to improve the reading teaching and assessment situation in secondary schools, we must train the English teachers as well as the head teachers", claims the teacher educator. After training, proper execution of CA and summative assessment or AoL must be ensured through monitoring and supervision from the competent authority having knowledge and skills of the subject, pedagogy, supervision, and providing feedback, maintains the teacher educator. The teacher educator demands introduction of formal mentoring to develop the English teachers. "Seen passages should be abrogated and such texts should be set from which answers cannot be given just lifting the sentences from the texts", suggests the teacher educator.

The suggestions seem to be useful in order to improve the reading teaching and assessment situation in secondary schools. However, the education authority needs to

understand the issues and take measures as appropriate. The following section 4.4 deals with the observation data.

4.4 Observation Data Analysis

As stated earlier, the current study collected data through observations of the reading teaching sessions of four participating teachers of two secondary schools in Dhaka city. The field-notes are developed through recurrent reading and editing of the data. During the field-notes development, the major findings from the observations emerge. The observation data have been analysed under the following heads such as teachers' understanding of reading (4.4.1); strategies used by teachers in teaching reading (4.4.2); resources used in teaching English reading (4.4.3); reading skill assessment in schools (4.4.4); barriers to teaching and assessing reading skill (4.4.5); and ways to improve teaching and assessment of English reading in schools (4.4.6):

4.4.1 Teachers' Understanding of Reading

The way most teachers teach the reading parts of their observed lessons proves that they do not have clear understanding of reading and the curriculum suggested ways of dealing with reading. Most of them start with greetings and then start reading out and explaining the text instead of engaging students in reading. Some of the teachers teach vocabulary with utmost importance and some others focus on pronunciation. None of the four teachers are found to set questions to be answered after reading. A portion of the field-notes of T2, for example, is a proof of teachers misconceptions regarding teaching of reading:

> The teacher entered into the classroom and greeted the students. She started to read out a text from a Test Paper and clarified it in Bangla. After that, she taught some words by writing them in the whiteboard and telling the Bangla meaning. After explaining the text, she asked the students to fill out the gaps given underneath the text.

Similar teaching strategy is used by T3 and T4. They, too, focus more on explaining the text and teaching vocabulary and pronunciation. They do not focus on the comprehension which is the chief aim of reading as suggested in the curriculum. However, T1 is observed to set pre-reading questions and she asks students to answer them from their reading of the text. The following excerpt from T1's field-note is ample proof of her better understanding of how to teach reading and what to do for improving students' comprehension skill. Her field-notes are:

> She displayed some questions in a PowerPoint slide and then asked the students to copy them in their notebooks. When the students finished copying, she showed the text about Nepal on the screen and asked the students to read the text in order to answer the questions.

The teaching sessions of T1 show that her understanding of reading is better than others. This may be because of her proactive nature and training received from different organisations.

4.4.2 Strategies Used by Teachers in Teaching of Reading

Observation of English reading skill teaching sessions of the four participating English teachers show that teachers do not follow the three stages in teaching of reading. Most of them employ traditional GTM instead of CLT approach. Only T1 has ideas about the three stages of reading skill teaching (NCTB, 2012b; TQI-SEP, 2018; Williams, 1992; Rogers, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c) and she demonstrates some expertise in using the three stages in teaching English reading skill. During her teaching, she engages the learners in pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading activities; but other teachers T2, T3, and T4 do not follow the three stages suggested in the curriculum (NCTB, 2012a & 2012b). Moreover, other guidelines regarding teaching and assessment of reading are not also followed. The field-note of T2 is a

good evidence of the teachers' use of traditional approach in teaching. T2's field-note is as follows:

> Just after greetings, the teacher asks some students to read the text one by one aloud. In the middle of reading, she stops the students to correct their pronunciation. She asked the students to write the answers of the questions those followed the reading text.

Although, the teacher (T2) asks students to read the text, most of the students do not have the same book from which she is teaching. And the book the teacher has with her is a guidebook, not an NCTB provided *English for Today* (NCTB, 2012b) book. Since the students do not have the books with them, the teacher writes the text on the whiteboard. She then tells the answers to the students and the students copy them in their notebooks; she does not tell the students to read the text to answer the questions; and she does not provide students with opportunities to answer the questions; actually, she is spoon-feeding the students; no scope is created for students to practise and achieve the skill.

In another teaching session with class nine students, the same teacher (T2) enters into the classroom, tells the learning outcomes (LO) to the students, starts to teach lesson six, unit seven, and the topic is Mother Teresa. The teacher teaches from a guidebook. Although the story is same, the *English for Today* book (NCTB, 2012b) contains the story titled 'Love for humanity' (Unit 7, lesson 6, class 9-10, p. 102). The field-notes of that session are as follows:

> The teacher did not exploit section A of the lesson which dealt with pre-reading activity. She did not set any purpose for the reading; I mean, she did not set any kinds of questions to be answered from the reading. She asked the students to read the text aloud.

It is worth mentioning that the guidebook publishers use the lessons in their guidebooks as it is in the *English for Today* book and they include some more questions and activities which are not there in the *English for Today* book.

T3 enters into class nine to teach a reading session. The lesson was They Had Dreams-1 (Unit 10, Lesson 3, p. 133). T3 also does not use the *English for Today* book and follow the curriculum prescribed three stages in teaching of reading (Williams, 1992; NCTB, 2012a, 2012b). He does not engage students in pre-reading activities and he avoids section A of the textbook. Instead of engaging students in reading practices, she delivers a short lecture on the text in section B of the lesson. The following can be a good example of T3's teaching strategy of reading:

> He delivered a small lecture on the text in section B of the textbook; asked the students to read the text aloud several times so that they can read the text fluently without stammering; then asked 3/4 students to read out the text aloud and he corrected their pronunciation.

The NCTB directs the teachers to teach grammar and composition in context and in the NCTB produced textbooks, examples have been provided first for practices and then the rules (NCTB, 2016). T4 teaches in the similar way as is taught by T2 and T3. Although they have training, their teaching is not methodical. T4 chooses a topic on adjective from *English Grammar and Composition* (NCTB, 2016, p. 22). Although the lesson is on Adjectives, there was opportunity to engage students in reading. In section A of the lesson, the instruction reads, "Read the letter and follow the words in bold". The teacher did not ask the students to read the text; instead, the teacher writes some sentences in the board using positive, comparative, and superlative degrees of adjectives. Then she writes some sentences in the board using positive, comparative, and superlative degrees of adjectives. The field-notes of T4 are as follows:

> "Today I will teach you comparison of adjectives or degrees of adjectives" declared the teacher. Although the NCTB directed the teachers to teach grammar in context, the teacher wrote some rules in the board such as when 'no other than,' 'than any other', 'very few', 'than most other', 'one of the' are used, and clarified to the students when to use them during transformation.

Again instead of teaching English grammar in context, T4 sticks to the traditional GTM method of teaching where she tells the rules of grammar in place of engaging students in language practices. A good example of her traditional teaching is as follows:

> Then she wrote the sentence 'Rahim is the cleverest boy in the class' in the board and showed students how to change it to positive and comparative. Then she wrote another sentence 'The rose is the sweetest of all flowers' in the board and asked students to transform into positive and comparative. When the students finished, the teacher checked 6 students' notebooks and gave feedback to them individually.

The field-notes show that the teacher does not use any book or written lesson plan in teaching; she teaches from her memory. She does not use the letter written to John in unit 3 of the book *English Grammar and Composition* (Class: 9-10). The letter contains some good uses of different forms of adjectives in context. Although she ignores section A of the lesson, she delivers a small lecture about adjectives. As she does not use the NCTB developed textbook, she does not exploit the reading practice and assessment opportunities contained in the textbook.

However, T1's teaching strategy is found to be different and it is almost similar to the guidelines provided in the curriculum. She asks students to read the text silently and to fill in the gaps that follow. Students having copies of the guidebooks, read the text and fill out the gaps. Then she elicits answers from the students and provides the correct answers if students provide the wrong answers. T1's field-notes are as follows:

> Dear students please open at page 247 and read the text silently in 7 minutes. Then fill out the gaps that follow. You can ask me questions if you fail to understand anything or you can take help from your friends.

The above data show that the teachers follow traditional teaching approach in teaching of English reading. However, T1's teaching of reading is partly consistent to the guidelines provided in the curriculum. The reasons of her better teaching of reading may be her degree in education and her training that she received from different organisations such as TQI-SEP, ELTIP, British Council, and so on. Another reason for T1's improved teaching might be her proactive and curious nature.

4.4.3 Resources Used in Teaching English Reading

All the English teachers are supposed to follow the NCTB-produced textbooks. However, in reality, teachers do not, in most cases, use the NCTB provided textbooks *English for Today* and *English Grammar and Composition*, although the textbooks attach a great importance to reading skill development of students. Additionally, the teachers do not utilise the TCG which contains the important points of the curriculum and the example lesson plans to be used in teaching.

During observation, it is noticed that none but one teacher, T1, uses the *English for Today* or the *English Grammar Translation and Composition* books. Moreover, they do not use the TCG and the lesson plans in it. The following field-notes of T2 are evidence that she uses guidebooks in her teaching:

> The teacher teaches reading from a guidebook called *Advanced Learners' Communicative English Grammar and Composition*. This guidebook contains texts from the *English for Today* book with Bangla explanations and exercises solved; and some additional exercises for students' practices. This book contains Bangla pronunciations of the new words of the text, meanings of words, and answers of the questions that are set in the *English for Today* lessons.

While the researcher observes T3 and T4 in their teaching session, they are also found using guidebooks or the Test papers. Moreover, they are not found to be aware of what lesson they would teach.

T1 is found to be following the curriculum guidelines regarding teaching strategies but in a session with the students of class ten, she asks a student to read the text aloud for others to listen. After that, she asks the students to read the text silently and to fill out the gaps in page 375. A section of the field-notes on her teaching is as follows:

> However, only 5/6 students out of 60 had the said Test Papers. Only those students who had the copies of the Test Papers and additional 10/12 students followed her instruction and did the activity and others remained silent; talked to classmates and made noises but the teacher was seen to be busy with the students having the Test Papers.

In the similar way, all other participants are observed to use unauthorised guidebooks and the Test Papers in place of the NCTB prepared *English for Today* (NCTB, 2012b) and the *English Grammar and Composition* (NCTB, 2016) books. None of the participating English teachers exploited the reading practices and assessment opportunities given in the textbooks partly because they are not aware of the usefulness of the textbook and partly because neither the school authority nor anyone from the NCTB or from other educational organisations monitors or supervise their activities.

4.4.4 Reading Skill Assessment in Schools

The observation of the classroom teaching of the participating teachers revealed that they do not assess students' reading skill; that is, the teachers do not check if the students understood the text or not during the sessions. In fact, teachers do not engage students in reading the text and in testing their comprehension. Only T1 assesses the students and all the others do not follow the curriculum guidelines regarding reading teaching and reading skill testing. T2 teaches the lesson in a traditional way and did

not organise any assessment activity. T3 also reads out and clarifies the text and solves the grammatical problems but he, too, does not conduct any assessment activities. And T4 also is not found to assess students' reading skill in any of her observed sessions; she uses to read out the text and clarify it as if she was providing knowledge to the learners although the National Curriculum (NCTB, 2012a) has clearly labeled English as a skill-based subject; and as a skill-based subject, skills must have been practised.

T1 uses multi-media projector in her teaching, displays the map of Nepal and some images related to the lesson but she, too, is describing the lesson; does not ask the students to read for understanding although the instruction in section A of the textbook *English for Today* was "Read the following passage on Nepal" (NCTB, 2012b, p. 71). Towards the end of the session, T1 asks the following questions in order to evaluate students' learning: 'What is kingdom?', 'How many ethnic groups are there in Nepal?' 'What do you know about the weather of Nepal?' and 'How many people live in Nepal?' These questions are not to check students' understanding of the text because she does not engage students in reading; she reads out and clarifies the text; and she does not ask students any higher order questions to check reading comprehension.

It is observed from the teaching of all the teachers that, they do not any CA for checking students' reading comprehension. Although T1 engages students in gap-filling activity, that is not fully to check the reading comprehension of the students.

4.4.5 Barriers to Teaching and Assessing Reading Skill

During the researcher's visits to schools from January 2017 to October 2017, and during the teaching observations, it is noticed that the participating teachers are not

sincere enough in their school activities. They are late in almost every session; and they are observed to enter into the classrooms 10/12 minutes late several times. Additionally, they do not take any before-class preparation for the classes they are going to teach. It is not known to them what they are going to teach and assess in the next class. T2, T3, and T4 are observed to ask the students what they are going to teach. The teachers are observed to ask the students, "What is today's topic? What are we going to learn today? What did I teach in my last class?" Several days, T2 is seen to be late by 10/12 minutes in reaching the school and entering into the classroom. T2's field-notes are as follows:

> After exchanging greetings, she wanted to know from the students what she finished in her last class. Students, too, were in confusion; they could not confirm what was taught in the last class. Then she started teaching a topic of her choice.

The researcher walks with the teacher towards the classroom and talks to her about what he (researcher) would do during her teaching although it is told to her earlier. The researcher wants to know from T4 what she is going to teach today but she cannot tell what she is going to teach! The following excerpt from T4's field-notes is a good proof that she is not aware of what she is going to teach:

> Actually, I forgot what I will teach today. She was faltering, "It is better if you do not observe my class today; actually I am late today, late because of traffic jam. No problem. OK, you can come; no problem; no problem".

This kind of situation happens several times with T2 and with T4. In some instances, the researcher has to cancel the observation schedule and reschedule it for some other day.

Another barrier is observed that most teachers do not follow the curriculum suggested three stages of teaching of reading; almost all of them do not utilise the resources

prepared and supplied free of cost to the students. These indicate that, there is a huge lack of training of teachers and monitoring from the competent authority.

When the researcher is sitting in the Teachers' Common Room observing and talking to the participants who do not have classes, he notices that, none of the participating teachers and others take any preparation for the next class(es). They talk to colleagues about their personal matters, not about what they are going to teach in the next class or what they taught in the previous class(es) as part of reflection. The field-notes of T4 are as follows:

> The researcher was waiting in the Assistant Head Teacher's Office for T4 as was settled with her the night before. The class start time was over but T4 did not arrive. When she arrived, she was gasping. She said, "Can you observe my class tomorrow? The researcher agreed and went away settling that he would come next day to observe her teaching session.

The researcher is again waiting in the Assistant Head Teacher's Office the following day. That day too, she enters into the classroom 7/8 minutes late. She was faltering about what she would teach. The following is the field-note developed on T4:

> She asked the students to take out the *English for Today* books but none of the students had the book. That day, too, T4 did not have any preparation for teaching. The teacher herself did not have the NCTB produced English for Today (NCTB, 2012b) book.

T3's field-notes are similar. T3 does not have B.Ed. or any other training to teach English. Whatever he teaches, he focuses more on English grammar. He is observed to teach the grammatical rules ignoring students' skill practices. The following field-note is evidence of his traditional teaching:

> The teacher taught pronunciation of the words written on the blackboard; the teacher uttered the words several times and asked the students to repeat with him. Then he tells the students why run takes an extra n (running) when suffix is added to it.

T1 on the other hand, in one of her sessions, uses PowerPoint slides in teaching reading. She also provides the before-reading questions so that the students can answer from reading of the text. However, her students have the *English for Today* books, too. She composes the text and places it in the screen and asks students to read the text and then to answer the questions placed underneath. After the reading is over, she asks some questions to test students' understanding of the text.

During observations, it is noticed every time that T2, T3, and T4 never take preparation for the teaching and curriculum suggested CA. That most teachers do not take preparation for teaching and continuous assessment of reading is evident in the above data.

It is obvious that teachers' way of teaching, lack of motivation and sincerity and training is an issue in the teaching-learning and assessment of English reading skill. However, T1 is seen to be more sincere in her classes and she takes preparation before the classes. T1 might be a sincere teacher who follows the curriculum guidelines in teaching reading or just might be she is methodical because of the researcher's presence. Even though she teaches from the Test Paper, she follows some of the curriculum suggested ways of teaching and assessment.

4.4.6 Ways to Improve Teaching and Assessment of English Reading in Schools

From the data analysis above (section 4.4.1 to 4.4.5), it is clear that teachers' lack of sincerity; ignorance about the curriculum guidelines regarding teaching and assessment strategies; uses of the unapproved resources; and lack monitoring and supervision from the NCTB or education authority having subject and pedagogy knowledge are the major issues in the field of English language teaching and

assessment. However, those issues themselves direct the solutions to the problems. In order to get rid of the problems, monitoring and supervision followed by feedback by the experts in the subjects and pedagogy can be of great help. The introduction of monitoring and supervision may ensure the teachers' seriousness and the use of the suggested teaching and assessment approaches and the use of the NCTB-produced resources properly. Training of the secondary English teachers can improve teachers' understanding of reading and reading skill assessment; and training may motivate the teachers to use the curriculum suggested resources in teaching and assessment of English reading skill.

4.5 Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Data Analysis

As stated earlier in Chapter Three, section 3.2.3 that FGD is one of the most used methods in qualitative research. Therefore, in the current research, alongside teaching observations, semi-structure interviews, and document analysis, data have been collected through FGD with students so that the data collected through different tools can be triangulated. FGD data have been analysed in the following sections under the heads of students' understanding of English reading (4.5.1); strategies used in teaching English reading (4.5.2); resources used in teaching of reading (4.5.3); assessment of reading in schools (4.5.4); challenges of teaching and assessment of reading in schools (4.5.5); ways to improve teaching and assessment of reading in schools. The FGD data have been analysed below:

4.5.1 Students' Understanding of English Reading

Like teachers, most of the students possess wrong understanding of reading. Most of the students who participated in the four FGDs (FGD-1, FGD-2, FGD-3, and FGD-4) understand that teaching of reading aims at improving the pronunciations, stress, and

intonations; and the students claim that reading is mainly reading a piece of text aloud. Reading to them is also how faster they can read with correct pronunciations. The students assert that their teachers ask them to read the texts aloud and their teachers correct pronunciations while the students are reading aloud. The students further claim that their teachers sometimes engage them in pronunciation drill. The participating students in FGD-1 understand reading in the following way:

> Reading aims at correcting pronunciations. We read loudly (aloud) so that our pronunciations are corrected; our teachers ask us to read aloud and they correct our pronunciations. Sometimes they engage us in pronunciation drill. Our teachers say that learning pronunciations during reading is very important.

However, only one participant in FGD-1 strongly claims that reading aims at understanding the text, not correcting pronunciations. He claims that pronunciations are mainly corrected through listening and speaking. None of the participants in FGD-2 is seen to be clear about what reading means. Most of them believe that reading aims at learning vocabulary. A section of the transcript of the FGD-2 is as follows:

> Our teachers read out and explain the text; tell us the word meanings; sometimes make sentences with the words; ask questions and tell us to fill in the gaps; and sometimes the teachers write the answers in the black board (the teacher uses the whiteboard but the students call it blackboard); we copy the answers and memorise at home.

FGD-1 and FGD-2 are in one school and the FGD-3 and the FGD-4 are in the other school. All the students in FGD-3 and FGD-4 have wrong understanding regarding how reading skill is developed or what reading skill is. The participants in FGD-3 claim:

> Reading is reading out a text by the teacher; clarifying in Bangla and sometimes in English. Reading is reading aloud. We can learn English reading if our teachers teach us properly; if they explain the difficult words and texts, we can learn to read. As we are weak in English, our teachers read out and clarify the text to help us to understand.

The members of FGD-4 believe that reading means reading the text aloud by the teacher and clarifying it in Bangla. They have six classes per week of which three are on English first paper (*English for Today*) and the rest three are on English second paper (*English Grammar and Composition*). They claim, "If we practise reading loudly (aloud), our English reading skill will develop; and if we can read with correct pronunciation, we will be skilled in reading".

The students in the FGDs do not have the understanding that reading is a silent process, and the chief aim of practising reading skill is comprehending the text, not correcting pronunciation or developing speaking and listening skills. However, the skills are practised and learnt in an integrated way; it is not possible to learn a single skill in isolation. One student's strong stance for reading comprehension might be because he studied in an English medium school until grade five.

4.5.2 Strategies Used in Teaching English Reading

The participating teachers' teaching style is revealed from observations as well as from interviews with the teachers. What learners think about the teaching style of teachers is revealed during the FGDs with the students. As stated earlier in Chapter Three and section 3.4.4 that, the FGD participants have been selected through lottery so that every individual student has the chance to be selected. Almost all the students' claims in all the four FGDs generate similar data as are collected through interviews as well as observations. The FGD data prove that teachers have a great love for GTM although CLT is a prescribed approach for all primary and secondary English teachers. The participants in FGD-1 claim:

> Our teachers tell us to read out the text aloud one by one. When 3 / 4 students read out the text; the teachers themselves read out and clarify the text in Bangla; write the new words and their meanings in the blackboard; and sometimes tell the grammatical rules.

The students in the FGD-1 allege that teachers do not create any scene or do not set any purpose through giving some questions or any other activities to be completed during or after reading. Teachers ask us to read and then they teach us the word meanings, and after teaching the word meaning, they ask us to answer questions, fill out gaps, match sentences, transfer information, etc. from the guidebooks.

The students in FGD-2 and FGD-3 allege that, teachers never organise any pre-reading activity and do not set any questions before reading. The participants in FGD-3, for example, say, "First of all the teacher reads out the text and clarifies the text in Bangla and then tells students to read aloud individually, and then ask students questions to answer orally".

The students in FGD-4 inform the researcher that they like reading aloud and reading aloud helped them understand the text. They have six (6) classes a week where three (3) classes are in English 1st paper (*English for Today*) and 3 classes in English 2nd paper (*English Grammar and Composition*). The students claim that their teachers use both *English for Today* and the guidebooks in the classroom teaching but they use guide books more. The participants maintain that when they (students) read one by one, the teachers stop the students and correct their pronunciations, teach them word-meanings through writing in the blackboard.

More evidence is found in FGD-4. The students further claim that teachers never set any activity before they teach the text. The participants in FGD-4 continue:

> The teacher reads out and clarifies the text, and then tells us to read loudly (aloud). She does not give any questions or activities before reading is started. They give us questions after the reading is over by the teachers. The questions are usually: what was the ---? When did s/he do the ---? When was --- born? What is the meaning of the word ---? What did s/he do for benefits of the humanity?

The students in FGD-4 praise their teachers (T3 & T4) as they help them so much in developing their English reading skill. They declare:

> Teachers (T3 and T4) are so good that they do not give us any trouble by engaging us to read anything ourselves as it is difficult on our part to understand the text unless the teachers make us understand. They read the text and prepare answers for us.

The FGD-1 participants confess that, their teacher T1 sometimes engages them in different activities such as reading silently, answering questions, practising dialogues in pairs, summarising a text, filling out the gaps, matching sentences, etc. The students in FGD-1 assert:

> Occasionally, one of our teachers (T1) tells us to read and answer some questions. Sometimes, she engages us in dialogue practices, 2/3 pairs consecutively, not the whole class together. Additionally, teachers ask us to summarise, write, fill out gaps, practise dialogue, etc. Sometimes teachers write the answers for us to memorise.

It is true that students may not be aware of the teaching strategies or the curriculum guidelines but from the discussions with them regarding how their teachers teach English reading, it is clear that teachers do not use the curriculum suggested three stages in teaching of reading. When a student claims that their teachers do everything for them, it is clear what method they (teacher) use. T1, claim the students, is observed to follow some of the curriculum guidelines regarding teaching of reading. However, the students' discussion reveals that T1 does not always teach in the way as she teaches in presence of the researcher; she teaches following the GTM in most cases.

4.5.3 Resources Used in Teaching Reading

The NCTB produced *English for Toady* and *English Grammar and Composition* for the secondary students as the textbooks. Each grade students of secondary level has

these two textbooks for use in the classroom teaching and learning. Those books have been designed in a way that teachers can easily follow the curriculum guidelines in teaching. In order to make the use of the *English for Today* book easier, the NCTB has also prepared a TCG which contains the curriculum expectations and some lesson plans which can be directly used in teaching and so that the secondary English teachers can follow those lesson plans in preparing other lessons. The students in the FGDs claim that their teachers do not use the NCTB-prepared and free of cost provided textbooks in teaching English. Ignoring the mentioned books, the teachers use different guide books and the Test Papers.

Teachers teach commercially produced Grammar books such as *Advanced Learner's Communicative English* or the Lecture Guide or the Test Papers or they use all of them together. It is worth mentioning that the current grammar book prepared by the NCTB is supposed to be taught in context; opportunities have been created for students to have active part in the learning process. All the students in FGD-1, 2, 3, and 4 claim that grammar, too, is taught using GTM where the teacher tells the grammar rules first, and then does almost all the activities themselves marring the students' language practice opportunities.

The students in FGD-1 complain that the school authority and teachers compel them to buy and use the guidebooks and the Test Papers. The focus group discussion transcript of FGD-1 is as follows:

> Our teachers teach us from the Test Papers or from the guidebooks. They write the words and their meanings on the board. They tell us to buy the guide books and the Test Paper. We buy those books as questions in the half-yearly and year final examinations are set from those books.

The students maintain that they like these books as they contain a lot of model questions and other exercises. The students in FGD-2 further claim:

> There are many Model Questions in the Test Papers and in the guidebooks. No question is set directly from the *English for Today* book although very often we see questions are set from the Test Papers and the guidebooks. The government has decided to include two seen passages in the SSC examinations to be held in 2018 from the *English for Today* book.

The students in FGD-2 claim that their teachers use guidebooks and Test Papers in most classes but occasionally the use the *English for Today* book.

The participants in FGD-3 claim that their teachers use commercially produced guidebooks which did not have approval from the Ministry of Education, Bangladesh. A section of the FGD-3 transcript reads as follows:

> Teachers always use some guidebooks such as *Advanced Learner's Communicative English*. Sometimes they use the Test Paper. They read out a passage from the Test Paper, explain the text and then tell us to solve the problems given underneath the texts.

The above data show that, in most cases, teachers do not use the NCTB prepared resources in teaching of reading and other skills. This may be because of the school authority's, the education administrators' and the NCTB's lack of vigilance to check if the planned curriculum is being implemented properly or not. Alternatively, it may be supposed that, the schools and the teachers are engaged in unethical earning from the publishers who persuade the schools and the teachers to select their books.

4.5.4 Assessment of Reading in Schools

Assessment plays an important role in teaching and learning, as the assessment practices very often govern the classroom practices (Brown, 2004). The students, who participate in the FGDs, describe their experiences about how their teachers assess their reading skill in continuous assessment (CA) and in summative assessment or AoL. It is clear from the FGDs that teachers do not perform CA as suggested in the curriculum. However, the AoL or the summative assessment of reading is performed

during the half-yearly and the year final examinations as per the sample questions attached at the back of the *English for Today* book. The students in FGD-1 claim that their teachers test their reading by asking them to read the text aloud; to tell the word meanings; and asking questions about the information contained in the text.

The participants in FGD-1 allege:

> Our teachers (T1 and T2) do not organise any class test on reading; when some of us read loudly, they tell us where we cannot pronounce the words and correct our pronunciations. Thus our teachers perform CA. There is no formative assessment of reading as you are talking.

Regarding AoL, the participants in FGD-1 allege that AoL is done in the half-yearly, year final, and in the SSC examinations and the AoL is done following the curriculum guidelines. The students in FGD-1 maintain that they have to answer questions from three passages. Among the three texts, two are set from the *English for Today* book. These two passages are called seen passage in the curriculum meaning these texts have been studied earlier. The students in FGD-1 claim:

> In half yearly and year final examinations, we have to read three pieces of text and answer some questions, fill in the gaps, match sentences, summarise, etc. Among the three passages, two are from the *English for Today* book or from other sources already known to the students.

The experiences of the students in FGD-2 are similar to those of the students in FGD-1. According to them, their teachers check how well they can read the text aloud. The students in FGD-2 claim:

> Teachers test our reading skill through asking us to read aloud one by one and then they judge our pronunciations. Sometimes they ask us to tell the word meanings, and to answer some questions. But they do not give us any mark or grade; they just do it as part of teaching. The teachers (T1 and T2) tell us to answer the questions after explaining the text in Bangla.

They further claim that their teachers test their reading by checking if they (students) have memorised the answers the teachers provided. The teachers do not usually check whether we understand the text or just memorised the answers.

Again, the participants in FGD-3 experience the similar kinds of reading assessment in school. The students claim that teachers ask them questions from the text they (teachers) have just read out and explained in Bangla and they (students) try to answer the questions. The participants in FGD-3 state, "Sometimes they ask us to answer orally; sometimes they ask us to write answers; sometimes they give home work to summarise and memorise the text; and later the teachers ask us to tell the summary orally in the next class". The participants further assert that although they summarise, the teachers never give them marks or grades or feedback. They further claim that their reading skill is tested in the half-yearly and year final examinations where they are awarded marks. That assessment is called AoL or summative assessment of reading. The following transcript on FGD-3 is a proof of their statement:

> In testing reading skill in the half-yearly and year final examinations, three texts are given followed by MCQs, short essay type questions, gap-filling, and information transfer, matching, etc. and the marks teachers award in these two examinations determine our final results.

Like other participants, the students in FGD-4 also talk about the CA and the AoL of reading in their school. The students allege that there is no continuous assessment (CA) of English reading in their school. Most of the students do not have idea about CA. Two of the students in FGD-4 ask, "What is CA?" The students in FGD-4 assert:

> After clarifying a text, our teachers ask us some questions like - How tall is the National Mausoleum? When was it constructed? What have you learnt from the text? Then we answer the question in Bangla in most cases. If we fail to answer the questions correctly, they tell us the answers. Is this CA?

The above quotation proves that there are many students who are not aware of the curriculum suggested CA. Although teachers know about CA, none of them practise CA in schools. Although some teachers are seen to ask some questions to answer, that is not CA as the teachers do not engage students in reading. Reading skill of students cannot be tested unless they are engaged in reading. Furthermore, the questions teachers ask and the activities the teachers engage students in is not a part of CA because CA has to be conducted at the end of a lesson or a chapter and marks must be awarded based on students' performances. The students claim that they (students) have to answer questions on reading for 50 marks from the beginning of 2018 academic session. Three passages are set in the examinations weighing 50 marks out of which 22 marks are from seen passages. The idea of the seen passages is also weird because reading skill never be tested with a text which was already read or taught. Only the teachers and the school authority should not be held responsible. Alongside the practicing teachers and the school authorities, the education authority including the NCTB and the BISE may be held responsible as they are not monitoring and supervising if the planned curriculum is being implemented or not.

4.5.5 Challenges of Teaching and Assessment of Reading in Schools

The students in FGD-1, 2, 3, and 4 claim that they do not have time to read the reading texts provided in *English for Today* book as they have to solve the Test Papers. Moreover, teachers use guidebooks, notebooks, and commercially produced grammar books in teaching English. Those books are not approved by the Ministry of Education, Bangladesh. The students are found ignorant of the barriers on the way to teaching and assessment of reading but they can assume that teaching English through Bangla is a barrier. The students in FGD-4 admit:

> Our teachers read out the text aloud and help us understand it through telling us Bangla meaning of the sentences, word meaning, and sometimes they tell us the answers of the questions. We do not see any challenge in reading.

Regarding assessment, students do not find any challenge. The students in FGD-2 claim that there is no challenge in teaching and assessment of reading. The students assert:

> We are not aware of the challenges of teaching and assessment of English reading skill. We do not know how to read a text to improve reading skill; our teachers did not tell it to us. However, we can easily answer the questions set in the school examinations as we are taught the text before.

The challenges of teaching and testing reading skill are obvious in the statements of the students above. The students are not aware of the curriculum guidelines and they are not sure if their teachers are teaching and assessing properly or not. As a result, the way teachers teach and assess reading seems to be good to the students. When the students read something on their own, they do not follow the three stages or steps as suggested in the curriculum (NCTB, 2012, 2013, 2016); and by Williams (1992), Rogers (2005a, 2005b, & 2005c). Only one student who is a participant in FGD-1 having English medium background until grade five asserts that most of the teachers do not engage students in skills practices. According to him, students' self-study followed by answering some questions may develop students' comprehension power gradually. However, the way teachers teach is a barrier on the way to developing students' reading skill. This particular student's perception regarding students' reading skill development is better may be because he was taught reading following the three stages in his previous school; or at least the teachers in his former school might get the reading and the activities done by the students.

4.5.6 Ways to Improve Teaching and Assessment of Reading in Schools

The students who took part in FGD-1, 2, 3, and 4, claim that they follow teachers' instruction regarding teaching and learning. "We are ready to do what our teachers

ask us to do", the FGD-1 students assert. This obedience of students is a positive aspect where the change can start from. In FGD-1 and 2, the learners claim that their teachers (T1 & T2) encourage them to read English newspapers and English books but in other two FGDs (FGD-3 & 4), the participants allege that their teachers (T3 & T4) do never tell them to read anything other than the guidebooks and the Test Papers. The following excerpt from FGD-4 is an evidence of what is claimed by the students:

> Our teachers never encourage us to read the NCTB prepared and provided *English for Today* (NCTB, 2013) and the *English Grammar and Composition* (NCTB, 2016) books. They create pressure on us to read the guidebooks and the Test Papers. If they ask us to read the NCTB books, of course, we will follow them.

However, only one student in FGD-1 claims that if the authority wants to improve the teaching of reading in schools, teachers must engage students in reading. Teachers need to create reading opportunities for students. "In my previous school, we had to read books and present the summary in front of others in the classrooms" claims the student. "And regarding assessment or testing, comprehension in reading should be given more priority" emphasises the student. The student claims that his teachers in the present school know English but their teaching style is different and he does not like the reading teaching style of his teachers. The student says, "I do not like the teaching style of my teachers because the way they teach is traditional; I do not find any pleasure; and they teach English through Bangla."

Most of the students in the four FGDs do not know how to improve the teaching of reading and assessment in schools. Of course, it is not sensible to expect this from the students where teachers themselves do not know. However, the only student in FGD-1 has stated the right thing that importance should be attached to comprehension in teaching and testing reading. It is obvious that his clear conception of teaching and assessment of reading is achieved from his previous English medium school.

4.6 Document Analysis

As stated in Chapter Three, section 3.4.5, documents play an important role in qualitative research. In this study, the National Curriculum (NCTB, 2012a), the *English for Today* (NCTB, 2012b) and the *English Grammar and Composition* (NCTB, 2016) books, Teacher's Curriculum Guide (TCG) published by NCTB (2017), Guidelines for the Test Setters and Markers for English (Appendix 10), and a test (Appendix 9) used in an internal examination of one the study schools were analysed as all the mentioned documents have direct relation with English reading skill teaching and assessment at secondary level of education in Bangladesh. The significant pieces of information contained in the stated documents and directly related to the teaching and assessment of English reading skill have been analysed and presented in the following sections:

4.6.1 The National Curriculum (NCTB, 2012a)

The National Curriculum (NCTB, 2012a) is the blue-print of the secondary education in Bangladesh. The curriculum advocates for participatory way of teaching and learning across subjects, which helps learners understand what they learn. The curriculum asserts that learning through understanding should be attached more importance and rote memorisation must be avoided. Teachers are advised to recognise the ability of students and they are asked to engage learners in learning activities such as pair work, group work, role play, class work, continuous assessment including class test, acting, dramatisation, and so on; and in doing that, of course, they will use appropriate teaching-learning materials.

In order to prepare the younger generation of the country fit for the competitive globalised world, teaching and learning English for communication has been

emphasised in the curriculum. The curriculum put emphasis on all the four English language skills practices in the class in an integrated manner in meaningful contexts. In order to develop the English reading skill of the secondary students, "There will also be provision for using supplementary reading materials" (NCTB, 2012, p. 73) alongside the *English for Today* book. The overall learning outcomes for reading are: the students will be able to "understand and enjoy stories, poems and other texts; understand written instructions and texts through silent reading" and "use dictionary and understand the table of contents of a book" (NCTB, 2012, p. 37). The curriculum asserts that language is a skill-based subject and students must practise themselves if they want to learn the language. In order to develop students' English reading skill, they must be engaged in reading following the prescribed three stages of teaching of reading (NCTB, 2012a & 2016; Williams, 1992; Rogers, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c).

In order to develop and assess the understanding of students' reading, the curriculum allots 50 marks for reading. There is a provision for continuous assessment (CA) in the schools throughout the year. Teachers can engage students in classwork, home work, and investigation and class tests for which 20 marks have been allotted. Through the mentioned activities, a teacher can engage students in reading activities and can provide feedback for improvement as teacher feedback and support is important for promoting students' language learning (Inbar-Lourie, 2008).

Alongside CA, there is a provision for two internal examinations in schools named half-yearly and year-final examinations in which too, teachers can assess students' reading skill side by side with other skills of English language. Teachers are allowed to use any authentic materials for teaching and testing students' reading skill (NCTB, 2012a) and by authentic text, the curriculum means texts that are written based students' contexts.

4.6.2 The *English for Today* and the *English Grammar and Composition* Books

The textbooks analysis reveals that there are 14 units and 70 lessons in *English for Today* book for classes nine and ten. That book contains 80 pieces of reading texts including poems and short stories. Every reading text is followed by some activities intended to improve learners' understanding capacity through gradual practices; and in some cases, students' reading comprehension can be tested with those activities given in the lessons of the *English for Today* (NCTB, 2012b) book.

There are also reading opportunities in the *English Grammar and Composition* (NCTB, 2016) book, too. Every lesson of the *English Grammar and Composition* (NCTB, 2016) book starts with a story with a view to presenting grammar items in context. The *English Grammar and Composition* for classes nine and ten (NCTB, 2016) contains 21 units and 68 lessons which include 48 grammar and 20 lessons on composition. In this book, there are 106 places where students are asked to read for understanding the grammar items.

Both the textbooks have got planned sections to be followed in teaching. Usually section B of every lesson in the *English for Today* is for reading skill practices. Although the lesson plans in the TCG deal with developing and assessing all the four skills of English language in an integrated manner, the TCG (NCTB, 2017) also provides clear strategies about how to deal with the reading part of a lesson and how to assess students' comprehension.

The *English for Today* and the *English Grammar and Composition* books are written based on the guidelines provided in the National Curriculum (NCTB, 2012a). As the English curriculum prescribes CLT as English teaching approach, both the books have

been written keeping provision for practices and interactions among learners and between teacher and the students. The lessons in the books have several sections such as A, B, C, D, E, F, and so on and every section has some opportunities for language practices aiming at developing specific skills. Of course, in most cases the reading in section A of every lesson of the *English Grammar and Composition* is for underlining or identifying words, sentences, and sometimes for finding what grammar points the text is dealing with. Alongside the reading opportunities mentioned, there are also some paragraphs, letters, essays, etc. for students' reading. Although all the three stages of teaching reading are not followed in this book, this also can help develop reading skill of a student if properly exploited.

Moreover, the preface of the two books says that the CLT approach would be followed in teaching both of the books. In the *English for Today* (NCTB, 2012b) book, many activities are included to make the lessons practice-based. Additionally, the *English Grammar and Composition* (NCTB, 2016) is suggested to be taught in context and through the engagement of the learners in language practices. So long as the teachers follow the participatory way of teaching, they are allowed to use materials other than those provided by the NCTB.

4.6.3 The Teacher's Curriculum Guide (TCG)

The NCTB has prepared a teacher's guide called *Teacher's Curriculum Guide* (NCTB, 2017) to help the secondary English teachers use the *English for Today* (NCTB, 2012b) book properly. Alongside putting emphasis on other skills practices, the TCG has laid particular stress on English reading skill practices and assessment. The NCTB states in the TCG that, reading is chiefly silent reading and the purpose of reading is comprehension. In the lesson plans included in the TCG, alongside

teaching-learning activities, there are assessment strategies mentioned for each activity. The following lines from the TCG (NCTB, 2017) are an evidence of what has been stated:

> By reading skills we mean silent reading. Reading aloud is part of speaking skills, which is mainly practised for teaching pronunciation of difficult words, sounds, stress and intonation. Silent reading is practised for developing students' ability to comprehend a text or visual object (NCTB, 2016, p. xxv).

The TCG has also confirmed that the three stages- pre-, while-, and post-reading of teaching reading would be followed (NCTB, 2017) and the lesson plans included in the TCG follow the structure that support the three stages of teaching of reading. And the teachers would consciously follow the sub-skills such as scanning, skimming, and inferring meaning from the context. The TCG suggests the teachers to utilise the tasks such as information transfer, Cloze passage with and without clues, and rearranging sentences in the process of English reading skill development.

The NCTB discourages rote learning and asserts in the TCG that reading skill assessed by teachers "need to be separated from memorisation" (NCTB, 2017, p. xxxiv). Additionally, the TCG urges the teachers to make reading testing questions in a way that the students are not able to answer them directly lifting from the reading text. Teachers are advised to use a whole range of vocabulary and sentence structures so that students cannot answer the questions from their memorisation. Alongside class work and class tests, teachers are advised to engage students in informal assessment like keeping a reading response notebook in which students will write their responses after reading a chapter or a book.

However, in assessment, teachers are advised to start with lower level questions and then to go for higher level gradually. The TCG expects that if these efforts continue, the students would be able to improve their comprehension skill and be able to delve

deep into the themes contained in the texts. In a lesson plan, for example, in the TCG, the consecutive instructions for the teachers are "Ask students to read the text in section A; ask them to read the questions and discuss in pairs; elicit answers" (NCTB, 2017, p. 5).

The above discussion makes it clear that the curriculum expects teachers to teach English as a skill-based subject, not as a contents or knowledge-based subject; skills are to be achieved through practices.

4.6.4 Guidelines for Test Setters and Markers for English

The Guidelines for the Test Setters and Markers for English (Appendix 10) describe all the test items covering assessment of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. However, only the guidelines related to the reading skill teaching and assessment are analysed in this section. The guidelines state that questions are asked or set to check the understanding of the readers. The guidelines further provide suggestions by saying that there will be seven MCQs from the reading text each carrying 1 mark. And in these 7 questions, there will be 2 vocabulary related MCQs (guessing meaning from the context and through inferences) and 5 MCQs on answering questions (skimming: reading for the main ideas and supporting details; and reading to infer meaning). There will be True/False, Matching, Gap-filling with/without clues, Cloze test with/without clues, Information transfer, Substitution table, Gap-filling with right forms of verbs, Changing sentences, and Rearranging sentences. The test setters are advised not to set a question like 'When was the Great Wall of China built?' as the answer of this kind of a question is directly found in the reading passage 'the Great Wall of China was built between 220-206 BC'; and the students can just lift a sentence from the reading text and answer the question(s).

4.6.5 Sample Test (Question Paper) Prepared by NCTB

The sample test attached at the back of the *English for Today* book (Appendix 8) shows that out of 100 marks, 50 marks are allotted for reading skill assessment. And the test items include MCQs, short open ended questions, gap-filling, information transfer, matching, and summary.

4.6.6 Test Used in School Examination

A question paper used in half-yearly examination (Appendix 9) of a school study school shows that the school authority allotted 50 marks for reading skill assessment. And the test has got similarity with the NCTB prepared test (Appendix 8). And the test items covered are as follows and the number of questions and marks distributions is shown in the brackets: MCQs (1x7 = 7), Open questions (2x5 = 10), Gap-filling (1x5 = 5), Information transfer (1x5 = 5), summarising (1x10 = 10), Matching (1x5 = 5), and Rearranging sentences (1x8 = 8). Teachers are advised to follow the test format in assessing students' reading as AoL or summative assessment. It is worth mentioning that there two AoL in schools, one in the middle of the academic year and the other is towards the end of the year.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter presents the data analysis which is a huge task in a qualitative research. The data collected through interviews with four English teachers, one curriculum specialist, and a teacher educator; four FGDs with 10 students in each group from classes nine and ten of the selected schools; through several observations of teaching sessions of the four participating teachers; and data collected from documents are analysed in this chapter. During data analysis, the findings of the research gradually

came to the surface. The major findings that emerge during the data analysis include teachers' and students' lack of understandings of English reading skill; reading teaching is influenced by GTM; teachers do not comply with the curriculum guidelines; teachers do not, in most cases, use resources provided by the NCTB to teach and assess English reading skill; CA is not conducted and the AoL of reading skill in schools is inappropriate; teachers do not use three-stages of teaching reading (NCTB, 2012a & 2016; Williams, 1992; Rogers, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c). However, in most cases, the students are found ready to follow the teachers' instructions. The discussion on the findings of the study have been presented in detail in the next chapter, Chapter Five.

Chapter Five: Summary and Discussion of the Findings

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the findings, triangulation of the data collected through different tools and from various sources, and critical discussion of the findings. First of all, the researcher restates the purpose of the study (5.2); summary of the findings (5.3); and then he presents the discussion in section 5.4. In the beginning of the discussion, data were triangulated through comparing and contrasting the data collected through the use of different instruments and from various sources. The triangulation of data collected from multiple sources using different tools strengthened the credibility of the findings as any single data collection tool and source do have inherent limitations. The participants' opinions on an issue were compared and the researcher arrived on a decision based on reasoning.

In triangulating, first of all, the findings of the semi-structured interviews with teachers were presented; secondly, the findings of the observations and at last the findings of the FGDs have been offered. Where applicable, the findings from the interviews with the Curriculum Specialist and the teacher educator have been placed in a descriptive way. Furthermore, data from document analysis were used when and if required. The researcher, in this chapter, also restates the significance of the key findings (5.5); contribution to the existing body of knowledge (5.6); and ends this chapter with conclusion (5.7).

5.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to explore what the secondary English teachers and the students understood by reading; what strategies the secondary English teachers employed to teach and assess reading; resources used in teaching and assessing reading skill; reading skill assessment practices in schools; what the major challenges were in teaching and assessing English reading skill; and the potential ways to improve the teaching and assessment of English reading skill in Bangladesh secondary schools. It has been reported in section 5.1 that the data collected from different sources using different tools have been triangulated to make the findings more convincing to the readers as triangulation is necessary because 'to establish a fact you need more than one source of information' (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 115).

5.3 Summary of the Findings

The findings of the study emerged during the data analysis in Chapter Four. The major findings of the study that emerged included - the participating teachers and the students did not have clear understanding of English reading skill (5.3.1); teachers did not follow the instructional strategies as suggested in the curriculum (5.3.2); the teachers and the students used the guidebooks and the Test Papers instead of the NCTB-provided resources (5.3.3); the teachers did not follow the curriculum (NCTB, 2012a) suggested assessment strategies (5.3.4); the challenges teachers faced included teachers' misconception of reading, large classes, workload, short class period, and students' weaknesses in English, and students' lack of interest in reading. Moreover, other challenges included - lack of sufficient training, defective assessment system, and absence of monitoring and supervision (5.3.5); and the possible ways to overcome the stated barriers included - providing rigorous training in methods and

techniques of teaching, assessment, and large class management; introducing monitoring and supervision followed by constructive feedback by experts having subject knowledge and pedagogical skills to keep teachers on the right track; ensuring that teachers use the curriculum suggested teaching and assessment materials and strategies; and taking measures so that no teachers and students can have any opportunity to use the low quality guidebooks and the Test Papers (5.3.6). If the aforesaid measures are taken, all the challenges are expected to be minimised. The major findings have been presented in the following table for the readers so that they can have a look at the findings at a glance:

Serial Number	Major Findings
5.3.1	The secondary teachers and the students did not have the understanding that reading chiefly aimed at comprehending the text (Grabe & Stoller, 2002; Williams, 1992; & Rivers, 1968) and reading at secondary level aims at comprehension (NCTB, 2012a, 2016).
5.3.2	Teachers did not follow the three stages in teaching of reading (pre-, while-, & post-reading stages) as suggested in the curriculum and other literature (NCTB, 2012a, 2012b, & 2017); Rogers (2005a, 2005b, & 2005c); Williams (1992). Teachers did not use the curriculum recommended CLT approaches (NCTB, 2012a & 1995); instead they used GTM.
5.3.3	Teachers and the students, in most cases, do not use the NCTB-produced materials such as *English for Today* (NCTB, 2012b);

	English Grammar and Composition (NCTB, 2016); and the TCG (NCTB, 2017). Instead of using the NCTB-produced materials, the teachers and the students used different guidebooks and the Test Papers in the classroom teaching. Alamgir (2019) reported that 37% of the secondary teachers use guidebooks and Test Papers in teaching. The percentage might be much more if investigation could be conducted in all the secondary level institutions.
5.3.4	CA or AfL was almost absent from the schools. Although the NCTB allotted 20 marks for CA, teachers did not utilise it. The curriculum asked teachers to assess students through classwork, homework and investigation work, and class test (NCTB, 2012a, p. 27; also see section 2.11.2 for more details). The curriculum guidelines regarding CA were fully ignored.
	In AoL or summative assessment, teachers followed the test format (Appendices 8 & 9) as provided by the NCTB (NCTB, 2012b). However, there are three pieces of texts set from the *English for Today* book carrying 22 marks. This culture of seen passages discouraged learners from extensive reading which is important for achieving reading comprehension (Miftah, 2013).
5.3.5	The major challenges faced by teachers in teaching of reading included teachers' lack of understanding, large classes, workload, short time allotted for each class, and students' weaknesses in English, and students' lack of interest in reading (see sections 4.2.5

	& 4.5.3 for more details).
	Concerning assessment of reading, like other countries (Balfakeh, 2009; Marland, 2003), the Bangladeshi secondary teachers, too, had wrong conception. Although CA or formative assessment or AfL is considered effective for better learning (Goldman et al., 2016; Yussof et al., 2013; Taras, 2005; Black & Williams, 1998), it did not receive proper attention from the teachers or the schools. Moreover, examination system which included seen passages in testing reading skill; insufficient training of teachers; and lack of monitoring and supervision from the education authority were some of the challenges. Like barriers in teaching, challenges of assessment could be minimised through providing training in assessment strategies, large class management; and introducing monitoring by the concerned education authority (see sections 4.2.5 & 4.5.3 for further details).
5.3.6	Teachers' wrong conception regarding reading, large class management could be minimised, if not removed, through intensive training in methods and techniques of teaching, assessment, and large class management; monitoring and supervision could be introduced to support teachers to follow the NCTB-suggested strategies in teaching and assessment and to compel the teachers and the students to use the NCTB-produced resources and other authentic materials.
	Regarding the 40 minutes' class time, the schools themselves could

solve it because the curriculum (NCTB, 2012a) gave the schools mandate to allot 60 minutes in single-shift and 50 minutes in double-shift schools. Therefore, the schools enjoyed the right to restructure their class routine allotting 60 or 50 minutes based on being single-shift or double-shift schools.

Moreover, the provision of seen passages must be repelled from the curriculum and the provision of "supplementary reading materials" (NCTB, 2012a, p. 73) must be implemented for the sake of English reading skill development of the students. Although the provision of supplementary reading materials is still there in the curriculum, there were no supplementary reading materials in schools.

Finally, there should not be any provision to set seen passages in AoL or summative assessment. It should have been ensured that the teachers and the students did not have any opportunity to use the low quality guidebooks and the Test Papers in teaching and assessment of reading.

5.4 Statement of the Findings with Critical Discussion

The findings of the study came to the surface during data analysis in Chapter Four. The major findings included – teachers and students had wrong conception of reading; teachers did not follow the teaching strategies as suggested in the curriculum (NCTB, 2012a, 2012b, 2017); resources prepared and provided by the NCTB remained unutilised; reading skill assessment strategies as suggested in the curriculum were partly followed as teachers totally ignored CA activities (see section 2.11.2) as

suggested in the curriculum (NCTB, 2012a); challenges teachers faced included large classes, workload, short class time, students' lack of interest in reading, and defective assessment practices. Almost all the challenges could be minimised through organising rigorous training for teachers, through introducing monitoring followed by constructive feedback; and repelling the provision of seen passages and implementing the curriculum stated "supplementary reading materials" (NCTB, 2012a, p. 73). The discussion of the findings has been presented in the following sections from 5.4.1 to 5.4.4 below:

5.4.1 Understanding and Teaching of Reading

The interviews with teachers, teaching observations, and the FGDs with the student participants revealed that most of the teachers and the students did not have clear understanding of reading. As cited earlier in Chapter Two, section 2.2 that reading is making sense of the written text based on the readers' prior knowledge (Chaudhury & Karim, 2014; Spratt et al. 2011) which means reading is decoding and making meaning out of the text based on prior knowledge and experiences. Most of the teachers in the interviews focused on the meanings and the pronunciations of words, stress, and intonation in reading. Some of the teachers alleged that reading skill meant how faster a reader could read; and some put emphasis on teaching the grammatical rules. None of the four teachers put emphasis on comprehension which is the prime focus of reading in the curriculum (NCTB, 2012a).

Observation data also showed that teachers did not teach reading in a way as suggested in the curriculum (NCTB, 2012a) although there was evidence (Goldman et al., 2016; NCTB, 2012a, 2012b, & 2016; Rogers, 2005a, 2005b, & 2005c; Williams, 1992; Robinson & Muskopf, 1964;) that the curriculum suggested teaching strategy

supported comprehension (see sections 2.7 & 4.5.2). Even in FGDs, the participants claimed that their teachers put emphasis on pronunciations and memorisation of the answers provided by teachers or available in the guidebooks (see sections 4.5.1 & 4.5.2) although the curriculum (NCTB, 2012a) strongly prohibits memorisation. The students' understanding of reading was similar to that of the teachers (see section 4.5.1). The teacher educator, too, from his long experiences claimed that most of the English teachers did not have clear understanding of what reading meant and how to support students to develop English reading skill (see section 4.3.2.1).

The secondary curriculum (NCTB, 2012a) puts emphasis on understanding of the text but our teachers were found to engage students in teaching word meaning, pronunciation, and intonation although Ko (2013) and Spratt et al. (2011) assert that reading may start with word recognition and word-level meaning, but the ultimate target of reading is comprehension. Similar to the understanding of the Bangladeshi teachers, teachers in Kenya (Atheimoolan & Kibul, 2012), in the USA (Hollenbeck et al., 2013), and in India (Begum & Hamzah, 2018) also did not have the understanding that reading is a silent process and reading is meant for understanding. Begum and Hamzah (2018) claimed that teachers' knowledge and skills contributed to students' reading comprehension. It was noticed that although our teachers had good educational qualifications, they were stuck to the pronunciation, grammatical rules, word level and sentence level meaning of the text, not whole text-level understanding. Like Ko (2013) and Spratt et al. (2011), Bangladesh secondary curriculum (NCTB, 2012a) maintains that word level, sentence level, and the text level meaning is important for achieving comprehension but it is not the last target; it is the beginning; the main target of reading is comprehension.

Like the secondary teachers in Bangladesh, the students also did not have clear perception about what reading was and how reading skill could be developed. Similar situation is reported in the USA by Goldman et al. (2016) and in South Africa by Madikiza et al. (2018) that students in America and South Africa lagged behind regarding reading comprehension and the teachers of those countries did not take necessary steps to improve the situation. The secondary teachers of Bangladesh, too, were not observed to be that much proactive to take actions to improve the reading teaching and learning in schools. If teachers in Bangladesh want to improve the reading teaching and assessment situation, they must engage students in reading comprehension instead of spoon feeding. Chaudhury and Karim (2014) also asked teachers to engage students in reading and assessment activities in order to improve the reading comprehension skill of the students.

Regarding the impact of teaching strategies, Goldman et al. (2016), Black and William (2014) and Yussof et al. (2013) claim that, an effective instruction strategy is that which engages learners in attentive reading and enhance the reading comprehension of the learners. The secondary English curriculum of Bangladesh (NCTB, 2012a, 1995), and Rogers (2005a, 2005b, & 2005c), and Williams (1992) suggest three stages in teaching of reading but the Bangladeshi secondary English teachers ignore the curriculum suggested three stages and use the traditional Grammar Translation Method (GTM) in most cases (Ebrahim, 2017). As mentioned in section 1.9.5 that GTM originated in Germany around 200 years ago has been influencing language teaching in Bangladesh and in many countries since then (Andres & Carvajal, 2013; Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2014). In Bangladesh, too, GTM is very popular with the English language teachers of all levels even after 24 years of introducing Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in 1995 (NCTB, 1995). All

the participants in the current study were found to be influenced by GTM even after receiving at least a round of training in CLT. A study by Hellekjaer (2008) reveals that the Norwegian higher secondary students' low IELTS score in reading was due to weaknesses in reading instruction where reading by students was neglected; and students did not know about the purposes of reading, and did not learn how to exploit meaning of new words, sentences, and the whole-text from contexts.

As reported in Chapter Four sections 4.2.2 that T1 knew about the modern strategies of teaching reading skill and she partly followed the three stages of teaching as prescribed in the curriculum (NCTB, 2012a, 2012b; Rogers, 2005a, 2005b, & 2005c; Hedgcock & Ferris, 2009; Williams, 1992) in some of her teaching sessions. Most of the teachers were found to teach word meanings, and translate the text into mother tongue as if they were providing knowledge to the students, not trying to provide reading skill to students although English has been declared as a skill-based subject, not as a content-focus subject (NCTB, 2012a). The above stated activities were ample indications of the teachers' being ignorant of the meaning of reading and the effective strategies of teaching and assessment of reading; and that they were much influenced by GTM marring students' opportunities to develop their reading skill through practices. Now the question is, if the teachers read the text and solve the activities, whose reading skill would be developed? Lipp and Helfrich (2016) claim that it is important who does the reading because the person who does the reading, his/her reading skill is developed.

Although the curriculum states that reading means silent reading aiming at comprehension, most teachers were observed to engage students in reading aloud although reading aloud is part of speaking skill development (NCTB, 2012a, 2017). Teachers might have engaged students in reading aloud instead of silent reading due

to lack of understanding or insufficient training or lack of monitoring from the education authority or due to all of them. Unless teachers themselves know what reading skill is and how to develop students' reading skill, the implementation of the curriculum is not possible.

It is difficult on the part of the teachers to enhance the reading comprehension of the students with this wrong understanding of reading. Although the curriculum suggests three stages in teaching of reading, and *English for Today* book and the TCG have been prepared to pave the way to the curriculum implementation, teachers do not use the strategies as suggested in the curriculum (NCTB, 2012a, 2012b, 2017), Rogers (2005a, 2005b, & 2005c), and Williams (1992). Whatever text the teachers and the students use in reading does not matter that much if it is taught using an effective strategy that engages students in attentive reading as it is reported to enhance the reading comprehension of the learners (Goldman et al., 2016; Black & William, 2014; Yussof, 2013). When students try to learn or acquire skills, teachers may scaffold if and when necessary (Hobsbaum, Peters, & Sylva, 1996). However, proper teaching and assessment may well happen if the teachers are properly trained and proper monitoring followed by constructive feedback is introduced by those having authority in the subject area.

5.4.2 Resources Used in Teaching and Assessment of Reading

The interviews with the teachers, observation of their teaching sessions, and FGDs with the students revealed that the teachers and the students, in most cases, did not use the NCTB produced resources such as the *English for Today* book and the TCG (see sections 4.2.3, 4.3.1.3, 4.3.2.3, & 4.4.3). The Curriculum Specialist and the teacher educator also alleged that most teachers did not use the *English for Today*, *English Grammar and Composition* books and the TCG in teaching English (see sections

4.3.1.3 & 4.3.2.3). They are observed to use the commercially produced and marketed guidebooks or notebooks or the Test Papers (see sections 4.2.3, 4.3.1.3, 4.3.2.3 & 4.4.3).

As mentioned in Chapter One, section 1.9.6 that, the CLT approaches came into being in the face of the supposed failure of the Audio-lingual and the Grammar Translation Methods during the 70's. The secondary English curriculum (NCTB, 1995) accepted CLT and put emphasis on learning English language through continuous practices. In order to develop the four language skills, the NCTB developed *English for Today* (NCTB, 2012b) book which contains lessons where there are opportunities for practising English reading skill alongside other three skills. Billah (2014) claims that the mentioned textbook was the only approved source and resource for the teachers to teach English reading in schools and he claimed that the textbook had clearly identified learning outcomes to achieve from each of the lessons. The lessons of the *English for Today* book had been designed following the teaching strategies as suggested in the curriculum. In order to make the language teaching smooth, the NCTB prepared another book called *English Grammar and Composition* (NCTB, 2016) so that teachers could teach English grammar in context. Furthermore, the NCTB prepared a TCG (NCTB, 2017) on the *English for Today* book so that the teachers could teach the book (*English for Today*) through the engagement of the students. It was revealed that teachers used the commercially produced Test Papers, guidebooks, and notebooks despite government ban on the guidebooks and the notebooks. Alamgir (2019) reported referring to the findings of a nationwide research by Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE) that 37% of the secondary teachers used guidebooks causing deterioration in the quality of secondary education. Like secondary level, the HSC level English teachers and students do not use the NCTB-

prepared resources and they are heavily dependent on commercially produced guidebooks and the Test Papers (Haque, 2016). Similar scenario was reported by Chung (2004) in China where 80% of the EFL teachers and learners were found to use materials which were not approved by the Ministry of Education, China.

The curriculum keeps provision to use materials other than those in the text book. However, the serious question was not regarding the use of the materials; the question arose because the materials teachers used were not authentic in most cases; and they were of low quality. And the way the materials were used was a big question as the teachers did not follow the curriculum guidelines (NCTB, 2012a) regarding the use of the teaching strategy; and 55% of the teachers, Alamgir (2019) reported, including English teachers were not properly trained to be able to select the reading and assessment materials. Kuzborska (2011) claimed in a study at a Lithuanian university with the English for Academic Purposes (EAP) students that collecting or preparing reading materials by the teachers improved teachers' creativity and professionalism. But the materials and the way Bangladeshi secondary English teachers used them was no way similar to that way which improves creativity and professionalism of teachers. The way the Bangladeshi secondary English teachers used the materials, might destroy their creativity and professionalism because all the solutions to the exercises were available in the commercially produced books. Kuzborska (2011) asserted that only finding or preparing input reading materials and using them in the classroom was not enough, teachers needed to create activities that might engage students in reading and thus enhanced students' reading comprehension skill.

Although a good textbook can serve as a good resource for methodical teaching of the lessons (O'Neil, 1990), the secondary English teachers in Bangladesh were allowed to use authentic texts alongside the textbook lessons. However, the teachers in the study

did not use materials from sources other than found in the guidebooks and the Test Papers; and teachers did not follow the three stages suggested in the curriculum (2012a). Allwright (1990) and Watkins (2007) alleged that there should be various types of texts for students' reading in the classrooms instead of a single textbook in order to provide students with a range of reading experiences.

According to Ur (2011), Harmer (2001), and Lipp and Helfrich (2016), simplified texts are useful to make the readers habituated in English reading and then they can go for the difficult texts. The similar need for using easier materials at the start of reading teaching was felt by researchers Robinson and Muskopf (1964) around 50 years ago and asked the teachers to "use materials which students can manage without becoming frustrated" (p. 80). However, the ultimate goal of using authentic materials is to expose learners to different text since students need to use the same level of texts as is used by the native learners of English.

Extensive reading is found to be absent from the secondary schools although it is suggested in the curriculum that there would be supplementary reading materials called Rapid Reader which would contain famous stories of the world literature in easy English (NCTB, 2012a & see section 4.6.1 for further details). Although that was in the curriculum (NCTB, 2012a), no arrangement like this was found in the schools although Park (2017) and Pearson and Johnson (1978) have claimed that the introduction of extensive reading along with intensive reading develop reading fluency and comprehension properly. The British Council, India (2017) suggested teachers to include activities that might be of interest to students and helped enhance reading comprehension of the readers.

The participating teachers' use of the commercially produced and marketed materials was due to the allurement of money or gifts from the publishers (Alamgir, 2018). Sometimes the publishers donated goods like tables, chairs, fans, and sometimes some pair of benches to the schools. Alamgir (2018) claimed referring to a letter issued from the Office of the Prime Minister of Bangladesh to the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Home Affairs to take punitive measures against those who are engaged in the syndicate formed in order to continue the illegal guidebook business. Alamgir (2018) further alleged that a section of the teachers were involved in the syndicate and the other parties being the publishers, book sellers, and the school management. When the schools received gifts or bribe from the publishers, it became obligatory for them to use the low quality and unapproved books published by those publishers. Although teachers and students were allowed to use texts other than those in the textbook, they should not be allowed to use the low quality guidebooks or the notebooks. Teachers and students should be compelled to use the textbook and the TCG in teaching of reading and other skills of the English language. Regarding teaching and assessment strategies, they must follow the curriculum guidelines. As there are evidences that engagement in reading improves comprehension (Park, 2017; Black & William, 2014; Pearson and Johnson, 1978), students should be engaged in reading activities instead of keeping them inactive in the classroom as Kuzborska (2011) claimed that learners must interact with the text and actively take part in the processing of the text in order to improve reading comprehension. Additionally, instead of the provision of seen passages, authentic texts from the Internet, international newspapers, and from other sources can be utilised to test the reading skill of the students (Chaudhury & Karim, 2014). Proper training and monitoring may be of great help to compel teachers to use the approved resources in teaching and

assessment and to reject or avoid the unauthorised materials contained in those guidebooks as the unauthorised guidebooks have been causing damage to the quality of secondary education of Bangladesh (Alamgir, 2019).

5.4.3 Reading Skill Assessment Strategies in Schools

The secondary English curriculum (NCTB, 2012a) suggests two kinds of assessment in schools. They are Continuous assessment (CA) or formative assessment or assessment for learning (AfL); and summative assessment or assessment of learning (AoL). It was revealed from the interviews with the teachers that the teachers were not aware of the curriculum suggested CA (see section 4.2.4 for more details). What the teachers believed about the CA was unsatisfactory because CA was not performed at all but marks were awarded without testing students' skills (see section 4.2.4). The students in the four FGDs also claimed that their teachers never organised any CA although they asked us to tell the word meanings, answer questions, match sentences, fill out gaps, and so on but those were done as part of teaching, not as assessment (see sections 4.5.4 & 4.6.4 for further details). The Curriculum Specialist and the teacher educator also provided similar opinions, that is, teachers never performed CA or AfL in schools (see sections 4.3.1 & 4.3.2).

As stated earlier in section 4.2.4 that assessment plays an influential role in what and how students learn (Biggs & Tang, 2011). Assessment is important for accelerating students' learning and skill practices as assessment system often has positive impact on classroom practices; or in other words, what is assessed is practised in the classrooms (Brown, 2000). Davis (2007) asserts that learning outcomes are the chief goals of a lesson and the learning outcomes are set based on the curriculum expectations. Assessment reports the teachers whether or not the learning outcomes

have been achieved or not. Although the secondary curriculum puts emphasis on assessment, the reality was different as teachers did not take assessment seriously; they did assess students as was suggested in the curriculum; and therefore, there was no scope to analyse the results of the tests and assessment to plan further teaching and assessment. According to Johnston and Costello (2005) and Westwood (2001), assessment must always aim at benefitting students which means students must improve their reading skill from all kinds of assessment in schools. The curriculum (NCTB, 2012a) expects the class tests to be practical and of short duration whereas almost no CA was visible in schools. The teachers in secondary schools did not conduct CA although CA was an obligation to be fulfilled by teachers (NCTB, 2012a) for learning to happen; teachers as well as schools did not conduct CA might be because the secondary English teachers and the school authorities did not understand the importance of CA or because they did not know how to organise CA or they did not feel the obligation to conduct CA. Dixon and Williams (2018) reported from a study in New Zealand that, although the New Zealand secondary teachers organised CA, they did not analyse the CA results to enhance students' learning. In that case, New Zealand was one step ahead of the Bangladeshi secondary teachers because the New Zealand teachers started to conduct CA although they did not analyse data to take decision that would benefit the learners. Chamot and O'Malley (1994) assert that reading comprehension enhancement is the progress in reading. Therefore, teachers must engage students in reading practices and testing so that students gradually improve their reading comprehension skill. Although teachers were not found to execute CA in schools, they were found to be engaged in summative assessment of reading as per the curriculum guidelines. The researcher is going to discuss the summative assessment of reading in schools in the following paragraphs.

The curriculum (NCTB, 2012a) asserts that learners' reading comprehension and higher order thinking skills will be assessed in reading. The secondary English curriculum (NCTB, 2012a) has clearly spelt-out what test items would be there in reading practices and testing (see sections 4.6.1, 4.6.4 & 4.6.5 & appendix 9). Although teachers were observed to follow the question pattern in the half-yearly and year-final summative assessment(see appendices 8 & 9), it was just following the test format as the students did not go through the three stages of teaching, most of them just copied some sentences or words to answer the questions. As a result, the skill of reading comprehension did not develop satisfactorily.

On the other hand, total weight of the summative reading assessment is 50 marks where 22 marks are from seen passages. It means teachers have to set three pieces of texts from the *English for Today* book although the curriculum strongly suggests authentic texts which students are not believed to have studied earlier (NCTB, 2012a; & see appendices 8 & 9). The curriculum (NCTB, 2012a, p. 69) asserts, "Text or test items should not be taken directly from the textbooks. Test items should be designed within contexts similar to textbook contents". But the reading skill in schools is assessed with texts that have been already taught and practised (NCTB, 2017; Appendix 8). The sample test or the question paper (Appendix 8) shows that questions are set to assess students' reading skill on 22 marks from the known source; that is, texts have been set from the *English for Today* book. As a result, the schools set three pieces of text from their textbooks for reading skill testing. This provision of seen passages has been added to the curriculum as an amendment in 2016 through a government order. It seems to be a major contradiction that works negatively on the way to developing students' reading skill in schools. Chaudhury and Karim (2014) suggest that authentic texts from the Internet, international newspapers, and

magazines should be used to teach and test reading skill of students. The sample test prepared by the NCTB (Appendix 8) and a test used in a school examination (Appendix 9) show that those questions are as per the curriculum guidelines but the teachers did not teach reading in a way that might enable students to answer the questions using the skills they had achieved through classroom practices. As a result, students' marks in reading did not reflect their reading comprehension as texts read or taught earlier were used to assess students' reading skill.

The secondary curriculum of Bangladesh (NCTB, 2012a) asked the teachers to set purpose of reading by setting some questions before the readers start reading the text because comprehension questions direct students' attention to the reading text (Nation, 2009). And in order to check comprehension of the readers, continues Nation (2009) that questions which include literal comprehension of the text; questions that help draw inferences from the text; questions that help check if the readers can use the text for other purposes; and questions that indicate the readers are able to be critical to the text should be set. However, in the test questions that require students to be critical were not usually set in the tests (Appendices 8 & 9). However, Hopkins and Nettle (2008) claim that along with other test items, true/false, MCQs, answering questions using a single word or a phrase can be used to assess students' reading skill. Similar to the suggestions by Nation (2009) and Hopkins and Nettle (2008), the Bangladesh secondary English curriculum also suggests the stated kinds of questions (see Appendices 8 & 9).

It is evident in some research findings (Begum & Hamzah, 2018; Goldman et al., 2016; & Yussof et al., 2013) that teaching strategies have strong and positive influences on reading comprehension of students. However, Bloxhan and Boyd (2007) and Brown (2000) claim that assessment is also important to shape the

learning experiences of students. Therefore, teaching and assessment must be planned together in order to achieve the desired goal of reading comprehension. The NCTB has prepared the TCG lessons following this principle where the lesson plans contain activities to achieve the learning outcomes and assessment strategies to determine if the learning outcomes have been achieved or not; if achieved, how much; if not, why not.

It was supposed that the poor situation of reading teaching and assessment in secondary schools was due to poor reading instructions and assessment in schools. Norwegian higher secondary schools also faced this poor reading instruction problem like in Bangladesh (Helleckjaer, 2008). Other pieces of texts set in the test (question paper) of school examinations, in most cases, were also previously taught from different Test Papers, guidebooks, and notebooks.

Testing and assessment is important in learning. It is observed from the above discussion that teachers did not apply CA strategies as mentioned in the curriculum and for that reason, although the curriculum guidelines were fully followed in the summative assessment, students could not apply the reading and answering strategies and skills to answer the questions. As students did not have practice opportunities in formative assessment or in CA followed by constructive feedback, most of the students answered the questions in the half-yearly and year-final examinations just copying from the passages. Sometimes they answered the questions without understanding the texts and the questions in most cases. The New Zealand secondary teachers apply the AfL strategies in assessment (Dixon & Williams, 2018) but the Bangladeshi secondary teachers did not use the formative assessment strategies to develop the reading comprehension skill of students although it was suggested in the curriculum (NCTB, 2012a). However, as stated earlier, the New Zealand teachers are

unable to analyse the assessment data in order to enhance students' reading comprehension (Dixon & Williams, 2018).

5.4.4 Challenges and Ways to Improve Teaching and Assessment of Reading

It was stated earlier in Chapter Four, sections 4.2.5, 4.3.1.5, 4.3.2.5, and 4.4.5 that there were some negative aspects or barriers to teaching and assessment of reading that hamper English reading skill development of the secondary students in Bangladesh. The researcher identified some barriers which included teachers' and students' wrong understanding of reading; teachers' noncompliance with the teaching and assessment strategies as suggested in the curriculum (NCTB, 2012a); and teachers and students did not utilise the NCTB-produced resources. However, the teachers mentioned some challenges that they faced during teaching and assessment of English reading skill. The teacher identified challenges included large classes, workload, short time for each class, and students' weaknesses and lack of interest in reading (see sections 4.2.5 & 4.5.3).

The researcher tried to explore the ways to overcome the challenges identified by the researcher and the participating teachers. Those ways to overcome the challenges emerged during data collection and data analysis. It emerged from the observations, FGDs, and interview data analysis that, students were so obedient to the teachers and they could be engaged in different activities as per teachers' desire. Teachers' teaching and assessment related knowledge, skills, and performances could be improved through intensive training that would provide the teachers with knowledge, skills and pedagogy related to teaching and assessment of reading. Roy (2004) and

Alamgir (2019) also suggested training for improving the performances of the staff of an organisation.

Teachers' lack of understanding, their noncompliance with the curriculum guidelines, and their lack or no use of the NCTB-prepared and suggested resources can be removed through introducing monitoring and supervision by education authority or by someone expert in the subject area and pedagogy knowledge and skills (see section 4.4.6 for more details). The monitor and supervisor would supervise the teachers to check if they were following the teaching and the assessment strategies as suggested in the curriculum or not; and if the monitor and supervisor found any deviation in teaching and assessment, they would provide feedback and motivation to bring the teachers back to the right track. Without introducing continuous monitoring and supervision followed by constructive feedback, the reading teaching and assessment situation may not be possible to improve. And it is also hoped that continuous monitoring and constructive feedback may also motivate teachers to work sincerely.

The government can discard the provision of seen passages which is considered to have negative impact on reading skill practices and comprehension skill achievement of students. Moreover, the curriculum suggested supplementary reading materials should be introduced for developing students' reading habit and comprehension.

Another way to get rid of the stagnant reading teaching and assessment situation was identified ensuring the use of the NCTB-prepared resources as well as other authentic resources. The use of the low quality guidebooks should strictly be prohibited as Alamgir (2019) alleged that those guidebooks were responsible for the deterioration of quality in secondary education.

There is contradiction in the curriculum regarding the assessment of reading. The curriculum asks teachers to use unseen (texts which are believed not to have studied by students earlier) and authentic texts to test students' reading comprehension skill (NCTB, 2012a) but in a circular issued by the Ministry of Education, asks the teachers to set three pieces of texts from the *English for Today* book (see appendices 8, 9, & 10). Moreover, the assessment planned in the curriculum (NCTB, 2012a) is not implemented in the field level probably because the schools as well as the teachers do not feel responsible to implement the CA which is believed to improve the reading skill of the students. Therefore, the education authority must ensure the implementation of CA which would improve the AoL or summative assessment naturally.

The challenges mentioned by teachers could be resolved through the earlier suggested training and monitoring. Four or five classes a day along with other activities such as scripts examination, test preparation, and so on can be managed if the teachers use participatory approach. If teachers use participatory approach or the curriculum suggested CLT, teachers would not feel so much pressure of work. Moreover, in response to the teachers' allegation about short class time, it can be said that schools can allot 60/50 minutes for each class as per curriculum guidelines (NCTB, 2012a).

5.5 Significance of the Key Findings

The key findings of the study include teachers' and students' lack of understanding of reading; teachers' deviation from the curriculum suggested approaches to and techniques of teaching and assessment of reading; teachers' use of the unapproved and low quality materials such as guidebooks and the Test Papers ignoring the NCTB-produced *English for Toady*, *English Grammar and Composition* books, and the

TCG; the curriculum suggested CA is almost absent from the schools and those schools practise CA partly, they do not use it appropriately, and the spirit of summative assessment is also lacking in the assessment practices; and other barriers to teaching and assessment of English reading include lack of sincerity of teachers; lack of monitoring and supervision from the competent authority; inclusion of seen passages in the curriculum for testing reading skill; and insufficient training of teachers.

As the barriers to teaching and assessment of reading have been identified by the researcher through a rigorous study, the findings are believed to be trustworthy. If the concerned authority takes appropriate decisions and steps to improve the teaching and assessment of reading in the secondary schools based on the research findings, the teaching and assessment of reading skill situation in Bangladesh may change positively. Therefore, the findings of the study bear a great significance.

5.6 Contribution to Existing Body of Knowledge

It was known through rigorous study that most of the teachers and the students of secondary level in Bangladesh did not know that reading aimed at comprehension; they believed that the prime aim of reading was to achieve fluency in reading with better pronunciation, stress, and intonation. It was also learnt that the secondary teachers as well as the students used low quality commercially produced guidebooks instead of the NCTB-produced teaching-learning materials. Moreover, the secondary teachers did not follow the three stages in teaching of reading as suggested by the NCTB (2012a, 2012b, & 2017), and Rogers (2005a, 2005b, & 2005c), and Williams (1992); the teachers were seen more inclined to GTM although CLT was the curriculum suggested approach. Additionally, the teachers did not follow the

assessment strategies as were suggested in the curriculum; curriculum suggested CA or AfL was not conducted at all but teachers were seen to follow the formative assessment or AoL as suggested in the curriculum. Three passages for testing reading skill were set from the *English for Today* book and the rest were also from the apparently known sources as teaches usually set the rest passages from the aleady taught guidebooks or notebooks or Test Paper. It was also known from the study that introduction of monitoring and supervision followed by constructive feedback in order to improve the teaching and assessment situation in secondary schools was vital. The study revealed that the use of seen passages in testing reading skill was a suicidal decision from the NCTB as reading skill can never be tested with a text already read by the students. The exploration of the mentioned issues and the possible solutions to those was a great contribution to the existing body of knowledge in the field of English language teaching-learning and assessment in general and teaching and assessment of reading skill in particular. This study may provide insights to other educational researchers to undertake further study in the area of reading skill teaching and assessment in secondary level educational organisations in Bangladesh and elsewhere.

5.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher triangulated the data collected through the use of different instruments and from various sources and then critically discussed the findings and gave reasoned interpretation of the data relating to the current literature. The researcher tried to show that the way English teachers dealt with teaching and assessment of English reading did not match with the modern way of teaching and assessment; teachers' teaching and assessment of reading also did not match the

curriculum guidelines. Although CLT was introduced to class six in 1996 (NCTB, 1995) and to other classes of secondary level on an incremental basis, it was shown in this chapter that, the secondary English teachers dealt with the teaching in their own way which was similar to the traditional GTM; the teachers and the schools did not care for the curriculum guidelines; and the teachers did not engage students in different language learning activities although engaging students in reading activities improve their level of comprehension (NCTB, 2017 & 2012a; Machand & Furrer, 2014; Hedgcock & Ferris, 2009; Taras, 2005; Williams, 1992). Although most of the teachers did not use the *English for Today*, *English Grammar and Composition*, and the TCG, they sometimes used the textbook lessons from the guidebooks. Guidebooks contained some of the lessons from the *English for Today* book. What materials the teachers used was immaterial so far as the texts were authentic and the teachers employed the curriculum suggested three-stages approach (pre-, while-, and post-reading) to teaching (NCTB, 2012a) which was believed to have positive impact on developing students' reading comprehension skill (NCTB, 2012a & 2017; Rogers, 2005a, 2005b, & 2005c; NCTB, 1995; Williams, 1992; Hedgcock & Ferris, 2009). As the teachers did not have the ideas about the curriculum expectations, the curriculum guidelines regarding English reading skill teaching and assessment; and the approaches and techniques of dealing with teaching and assessment of reading, the teachers' reading teaching and reading skill assessment was not as they should have been as per the curriculum guidelines. What emerged from the discussion included - teachers needed intensive training (Roy, 2004; Steele & Zhang, 2016) on reading skill teaching and assessment so that secondary English teachers' understanding of teaching and assessment of reading improved enabling them to perform better in teaching and assessment of reading in schools. Alamgir (2019) reported citing the

CAMPE study that 55% of the secondary English teachers did not have necessary training.

This chapter reiterates that, alongside organising rigorous training for teachers, monitoring and supervision must be introduced in order to check if the teachers are utilising the NCTB-produced resources or not; and if the teachers are applying the teaching and assessment techniques as suggested in the curriculum as the curriculum expectations remain unfulfilled in most cases due to poor implementation of the planned curriculum. Most of the teachers either do not know about the benefits of engaging students or they are not trained to engage learners although curriculum adopted CLT approach (NCTB, 2012a & 1995) which advocates for learning language skills through practices. Through training, monitoring and supervision followed by constructive feedback, teachers should be brought back to the curriculum prescribed ways of teaching and assessment of reading which supports reading comprehension. Other minor barriers teachers identified would be minimized if they receive proper training and monitoring followed by constructive feedback.

This chapter also describes the researcher's contribution to the existing body of the knowledge. Furthermore, this chapter states the significance of the findings. The researcher claims in this chapter that if the findings are taken into cognisance by the education administrators and the curriculum planners, a huge change may happen in the field of English language teaching-learning and assessment in general and reading skill teaching and assessment in particular.

In the next chapter the researcher summarises the dissertation; states the implications of the study and concludes the dissertation by stating the limitations and how the limitations are dealt with and identifying the probable areas for further study.

Chapter Six: Implications and Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

This is the last chapter of the dissertation. This chapter presents the summary of the dissertation (6.2); limitations of the study (6.3); implications (6.4); areas for further study (6.5); and conclusion (6.7). The stated sections have been presented below:

6.2 Summary of the Dissertation

The current study *Teaching and Assessment of English Reading skill at Secondary Level in Bangladesh: Practices and Challenges* attempted to explore teachers' and students' understanding of English reading and reading skill assessment at secondary level of education in Bangladesh; what strategies teachers employed to develop students' English reading skill; teachers' compliance with the curriculum guidelines or the directions regarding the three stages used in teaching of reading; what resources the English teachers used to teach English reading skill; reading skill assessment practices in schools; and how to improve the teaching and assessment of reading skill at secondary level schools in Bangladesh. The chapter-wise summary of the dissertation has been presented in the following sections.

The first chapter of the dissertation stated the background of the study; statement of the problem; purpose and significance of the study; research site and the participants; formulated the research questions the answers of which were sought in the study; and defined all the terms and concepts used in the study. The terms used in this study were made clear to the readers in this chapter so that the readers can easily understand what

is meant by the terms in this study although they may have different connotations in other places.

The second chapter of the dissertation reviewed the related literature. Literature related to the research questions has been reviewed. The researcher reviewed literature related to the meaning of reading; types of reading; purpose of reading; reading policy in Bangladesh; reading teaching resources and approaches to reading; English reading teaching situation in Bangladesh; English reading teaching practices in other countries; purpose and types of assessment; reading skill assessment strategies suggested in the curriculum and assessment practices in Bangladesh secondary schools; and the training of teachers in teaching and assessment of reading. Literature review has been done to make the understanding of the researcher clear regarding the current study; find the gaps in the literature; consolidate the researcher's knowledge in and around the research area; and to learn about the English curriculum and the curriculum expectations regarding the teaching and assessment of English reading.

The third chapter of the dissertation stated the research methodology; methods employed to conduct the research; research site and participants; describes the data collection tools and procedures; data analysis process and presentation of the findings; rigour and trustworthiness; and how the ethical issues have been handled.

The fourth chapter of the thesis dealt with the data analysis. The collected data were analysed tool-wise and for that reason, data collected through semi-structured interviews with the teachers, the Curriculum Specialist, and the teacher educator; class teaching observations; FGDs with four groups of students; and document analyses have been placed separately under the themes emerged during data analysis.

The fifth chapter of the dissertation presented the summary of the findings; triangulated data collected from different sources through the use of various tools; and the discussion of the findings. In this chapter, the researcher has also stated the contribution to the existing body of knowledge, and the significance of the findings.

The sixth chapter, which is also the last chapter of the dissertation, contains the summary of the dissertation; implications of the findings; and how the limitations were dealt with in order to extract the best out of the limitations. And the last chapter is followed by the references and the appendices.

6.3 Limitations of the Study

The researcher purposively selected only four secondary English teachers from two schools of Dhaka city (see section 1.7 for more details). The researcher could not include more institutions including English version schools from different areas of the city or elsewhere; and teachers who taught in madrasas and used the similar English textbooks could not be included due to the time-bound nature of the study. Moreover, the researcher had to conduct the research as a full time teacher educator. It would have been difficult on the part of the researcher as an in-service teacher educator to cover wider areas and larger number of institutions, teachers, and students. However, as the genre of the study was qualitative and the aim of a qualitative study is to go deep into the research problem instead of breadth, the researcher observed the teachers and their teaching for long 11 months from January 2017 to November 2017. Qualitative research usually does not expect generalisation (Bogdan and Biklen, 2007) but the findings of the current study may be trustworthy and useful because of the rigorousness of the study. In the current study, the researcher employed rigorous efforts to investigate into the teachers' and the

students' understanding of reading; the teaching and assessment practices in schools; resources used in teaching and assessment of reading; the barriers secondary English teachers faced in teaching and assessment of reading; and the possible way to come out of the stagnant reading teaching and assessment situation in secondary schools. As the research was rigorous and the ethical aspects were carefully handled, the findings of the study are believed to be trustworthy. Additionally, the researcher's lived experiences as a teacher educator whose responsibility is to educate and train secondary English teachers from wider areas of the country for the last 22 years confirm the findings as true and valid.

6.4 Implications

The findings of the study revealed that the secondary English teachers and the students did not have clear understanding of reading. In order to overcome this situation, country-wide special training on reading skill teaching and assessment can be arranged. Alongside the government initiatives, in-house training organised by the individual organisation can be of great use to make the teachers and the students' understanding clear. The participants were critical about the reading skill assessment system in Bangladesh which did not match with the teaching style and assessment guidelines as prescribed in the National Curriculum (NCTB, 2012a). Therefore, the concept of the 'seen passage' must be repelled for the sake of reading skill development of the learners and there should be more opportunities for additional reading in schools and at home.

As a teacher educator, a teacher trainer, and as a textbook writer, the researcher can raise these issues during his frequent meetings with the policy makers, the curriculum planners and the education administrators. The researcher has a plan to disseminate

the research findings among the curriculum planners, English language teacher educators, secondary English teachers, and the education administrators through organising seminars; and this can endear the education stakeholders to take appropriate actions which may help improve the English reading skill teaching and assessment situation in the country. Moreover, if the findings of the study are published in the newspapers and in a research journal, many English language teachers and assessors, researchers, education planners, and education managers would be able to take necessary actions from their own positions.

However, at the personal level, the five year long research journey has widened the outlook of the researcher regarding the current status of English reading skill teaching and assessment at secondary level of education in Bangladesh. The researcher has been able to identify some of the major challenges of English reading skill teaching and assessment in secondary schools and also explored some ways that can improve the situation. This identification and understanding of the reading skill teaching and assessment situation would certainly help him deal with the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) students as well as the practising English teachers during in-service training sessions. The findings of the study may also enable other English language teacher educators in the country and elsewhere to have an insight into the ways how the secondary English teachers deal with English reading skill teaching and assessment. This research may act as a proof of the current status English reading skill teaching and assessment in Bangladesh. Being informed about the poor reading teaching and assessment situation in the secondary schools, the government can take a project in order to improve the situation.

6.5 Areas Identified for Further Study

The current research was a qualitative study with four English schools and 40 students from the two schools in Dhaka city; one Curriculum Specialist and a teacher educator. As stated in section 6.2, the title of the study was *Teaching and Assessment of English Reading Skill at Secondary Level in Bangladesh: Practices and Challenges*. Some other researchers may be interested in undertaking research projects to further investigate the reading teaching and assessment with larger number of participants, more schools situated in different parts of Bangladesh.

Additionally, a good number of studies can be conducted exclusively in the areas of curriculum and textbooks; extensive reading for improving comprehension skill; teacher education and training; and so on. The English version schools or the madrasas where the NCTB-produced resources are used can be other sites of study.

6.6 Conclusion

This chapter dealt with the summary of the dissertation; limitations of the study and how the limitations were transformed into strengths; policy implications of the major findings; what the researcher learnt from the study; and the researcher also identified some areas for further study. As reading has a power to transform the younger generation into enlightened citizens (Bacon, 1696 as cited in Dr. Sen, 2018), reading teaching and assessment practices should be strengthened in secondary schools in Bangladesh. It can be said that, if measures are taken to develop English language teachers through training attaching added importance to reading skill teaching and assessment, English reading teaching and assessment situation in the country would change positively. It is expected that the Ministry of Education would take necessary measures based on the findings of the study and thus the English reading skill

teaching and assessment would get proper attention from the teachers, the students, and from the education planners and administrations. Additionally, English teachers must be proactive and acquire the four language skills so that they can be professionally developed and use the language skills when required because if the teachers themselves are not skilled in English, only training and resources may not produce much effect because a better curriculum may be poorly implemented if the teaching staff is not properly educated and trained (Podder, 2019). If the stated measures are taken, the reading teaching and assessment situation would start to change positively.

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Appendices

Appendix: 1

Consent Form

Cell Phone: 01715785156/01818307348 e-mail: ranjitpodder67@gmail.com	*Ranjit Podder* *Associate Professor of English* *Teachers' Training College Dhaka*

I have been given a full explanation of the research project and I understand what will be required of me if I agree to take part in the research project. I also understand that my participation in this project *Teaching and Assessment of English Reading Skill at Secondary Level in Bangladesh: Practices and Challenges* is voluntary and that I may withdraw myself at any stage of the study without penalty.

I understand that any information or opinions I provide will be treated as confidential and that any published or reported results will not identify me and my institution.

I understand that data collected for this study will be kept in a secured place and will be destroyed after the degree (Ph.D.) is awarded.

I understand that, if I require any further information, I can talk to the researcher, Ranjit Podder. If I have any complaints, I can contact the Research Supervisor, Professor Dr. Mariam Begum, IER, Dhaka University at her cell phone number ---.

By signing below, I agree to participate in the research project.

Name:

Date:

Signature:

Cell phone number:

Email:

Appendix: 2

Observation protocol

Name of the School:

Name of the teacher:

Class & section of teaching: Time of teaching (from – to):

Date: Unit & Lesson:

Topic:

Number of students in the class: Present: Male: Female:

Taught before this class (class, subject):

Will teach after this class:

Skills focused in the lesson:

Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing

	Categories/Behaviours	Observation Notes
Before class	Teacher's activities before the class: Planning/reading the lesson: Preparing/collecting teaching aids: Other activities:	

During Class	Warm up activities: **Learning outcomes**: **Teaching strategies**: **Pre-, while-, and post reading activity** (set scene for reading, set purpose for reading, while-reading, post-reading) **Instructions** (medium, clarity, etc.): **Purpose of reading:** Specific information – Gist - Vocabulary teaching: **Reading** (silent, aloud, teacher's reading): **Understanding checking:** Peer teaching/pair checking/pair work/groupwork, etc.: **Use of black/white board**: **Teaching aids:** **Teacher's voice:** **Use of technology:** **Teacher's attitude/behavior:** Giving HW: **Motivational activities:** **Written lesson plan**:	
After Class	**Reflection**: Teacher's activities after the class:	

School & classroom environment	Cleanliness, light, air, quietness, etc.: Sitting arrangement /furniture	
Assessment-related information	Strategies/techniques of assessment (CA): AfL Feedback:	

Overall comments/additional comments:

Appendix: 3

Interview Schedule for Teachers

Section A

1. What do you understand by reading?

2. How do students develop their reading skill?

3. What opportunities are there in the *English for Today* books for students' reading skill practice?

4. What strategies are suggested in the curriculum to teach English reading skill?

5. What strategies/stages do you follow to teach English reading skill?

6. What difficulties do you face in teaching reading skill?

7. What resources do you use in teaching English reading skill? Why do you use them?

8. What do you do for continuous assessment (CA) of your students' reading skill?

9. Do you prepare your tests/question papers or you buy them from other organisations?

10. How do you assess your students' reading skill?

11. What test items do you set/you think are good for assessing reading skill?

12. What kinds of activities (PW, GW) do you engage learners in to develop reading skill?

13. What strategies do you apply to engage students in reading for specific information and for the gist?

14. How do you provide feedback to students?

15. What do you do to form students' habit of extensive reading?

16. Why is reading skill important, according to you?

17. Do you plan your lesson before you teach?

18. What teaching aids do you use in teaching reading?

19. What kinds of questions/activities are suggested in the curriculum to engage students in reading practices?

20. What does the curriculum say about English reading skill of secondary school passed students?

21. What kind of training have you received to teach English?

22. Tell me in detail whether the training you have received was sufficient or insufficient for teaching reading skill? Why?

23. How many English classes do you have to teach per day?

24. What other subjects do you have to teach other than English?

25. What other activities do you have to perform other than teaching?

26. What are the professional development opportunities in schools?

27. What are the challenges of teaching and assessing English reading skill in schools, according to you?

28. Did you take part in the curriculum dissemination training? If yes, what did you learn there?

29. How reading teaching and assessment situation be improved, according to you?

Note: The following questions in section B were asked to the participants based on the observations of their teaching sessions. Some questions (such as the following) were framed by the researcher during observation to be asked during interviews. These questions were asked during interviews as probing questions alongside other probing questions.

Section B

1. Why didn't you conduct pre-reading activities?

2. Why did you ignore section A of the lesson?

3. Why didn't you ask students to read the text themselves?

4. Why did you ask students to read aloud?

5. Why did you read out and clarify the text?

6. Why did you provide the answers to the students? Why did you not let them try?

7. Why did you/didn't you set questions/true-false/gap-fills before students' reading?

8. Why did you check only some of the students' answers in their notebooks?

9. Why didn't you engage students in pair-checking or asking and answering questions?

Note: The questions in section B slightly varied from participants to participants based on the findings of their observations.

Appendix: 4

Teachers' Information Form

1. Name of school:

2. Name of teacher:

3. Age: Sex:

4. Total experience as an English teacher: ---- years.

5. Educational qualifications (Mention subject, university, class/division, year of passing):

Name of Degrees	Subject	Class/Division	University	Year of passing
BA/B.com/B.Sc/--- (Hon's/Pass)				
MA/M.Com/M.Sc/---				
B.Ed./Dip-in-Ed/M.Ed./B.EdAg/C in Ed./---				
M.Phil./Ph.D.				
Others				

6. Studied English at degree level: --- marks

7. Studied English at Master level: --- marks

8. Training received on English: (Examples: ELTIP 21 days/ TQI-SEP 14/24 days/ NAEM/BC/BRAC/FSSAP/ etc.). Mention time of the training and the venue:

9. Were there (training) any sessions on the methods and techniques of teaching and assessing/testing reading skill?

10. How many English classes do you have to teach per day?

11. You were recruited as (English/ Maths/Bangla/--- teacher):

12. Number of sections in 9 and 10:

13. Number of teachers who teach in 9 and 10 classes:

14. How many classes do you teach a day?

Appendix: 5

Teaching Observation Form 2

University of Nottingham

Name of the lecturer: Date:

Course Code and Title: Time:

1. Was the lecturer prepared for the session?

2. What elements did the session include? (e.g.: lecture, discussion, technology)

3. Did the lecturer attempt to engage students during the session? If so, how?

4. Did the instructor provide meaningful and useful feedback to student contributions during the session?

5. What are intellectual challenges of the session?

6. What is the best part of the session?

7. Did the lecturer use voice to create positive impact in the classroom?

8. Other observations:

Observer:

Teaching Observation Form 3

Nottingham University UK/China/Malaysia

Teacher's Name:

  Date:

Grade/Subject:

  Time:

Directions: This form can be used by the evaluator to document during formal classroom observation. One form should be given to the teacher and one copy should be maintained by the evaluator for the entire evaluation cycle to document growth. It is unlikely that all teacher performance standards would be documented in a single classroom visit. In fact, an observation might focus on a specific standard.

1. Professional Knowledge	Specific Examples:
- Address appropriate curriculum standards - Facilitates students' use of higher level thinking skills - Demonstrates ability to link present content with past and future learning - Demonstrates an accurate knowledge of the subject matter checking for understanding - Demonstrates skills relevant to subject area(s) utilising best practices based on current research	▪ ▪ ▪ ▪ ▪ ▪ ▪ **Evident**　　　　**Not Evident**

• Bases instruction on goals that reflect high expectations	
2. Instructional Planning • Analyses and uses student learning data to inform planning • Plans instructions and time for realistic pacing • Plans for differentiated instruction • Develops appropriate long-and-short-range plans and adapts plans • Coordinates plans with appropriate colleagues	**Specific Examples:** ▪ ▪ ▪ ▪ **Evident Not Evident**
3. Instructional Delivery • Addresses individual learning differences • Uses rigorous instructional strategies • Uses instructional technology • Engages students • Builds on prior knowledge • Communicates clearly • Maximises instructional learning time • Implements the Gradual Release Model	**Specific Examples:** ▪ ▪ ▪ ▪ ▪ ▪ ▪ **Evident Not Evident**

4. Assessment of and for student learning	Specific Examples:
• Analyses data from district benchmarks	▪
• Uses assessment tools based on division curriculum and pacing guides	▪
• Uses a variety of valid, appropriate assessments	▪
• Maintains assessment information	▪
• Uses pre-, post-assessment data on each student	**Evident Not Evident**
• Maintains appropriate records	
• Gives constructive feedback	

Appendix: 6

Schedule for FGDs with Students

Discussion areas	Prompt questions/points
Language skills	What are the English language skills?
	Which of the skills do you like most and why?
Reading skill teaching & assessment	What is your understanding of reading skill?
	How do you read a text, silently or loudly?
	What activities do your teacher do to develop your reading skill?
	Do your teachers set the scene by asking some questions/showing a picture/asking and answering questions?
	Does your teacher set questions (questions/gap-filling/true-false/substitution table/information transfer etc.?) to answer after the text is read?
	What do you read other than the textbooks and why do you read them?
	Does your teacher engage you in silent reading?
	Can you tell me some activities that your teacher involves you in?
	Do your teachers encourage you to read English (English newspapers, poems, stories, novels, etc.)?
	What does your teacher do for CA of English reading skills?
	What kind of questions do you find in half yearly and year final examinations related to reading comprehension?
	Why do you think reading skill is important?
Materials used in teaching reading	Do your teachers use the EfT and the *English Grammar & Composition* books? If the answer is 'no', what do they use?
	Do your teachers use any technology (Internet, Multi-media Projectors, etc.) in your reading classes?
Others/ Miscellaneous	How many English classes do you have per week?
	What do you read other than the textbooks? Why do you read them?
	How many hours do you read English (textbooks, newspapers, novels, etc.) a day on average?

Appendix: 7

Interview Schedule for the Curriculum Specialist and the Teacher Educator

Respondents	The following questions and some probing questions were asked as situations dictated
The curriculum specialist and the teacher educator	Please make comments on the secondary English teachers' understanding of reading skill.
	How do the teachers teach the reading lessons or the reading parts of the lessons?
	Have the secondary English teachers received sufficient training to implement the *English for Today* and the English Grammar & Composition books properly?
	Is there anybody/organisation to check if the teachers are implementing the national curriculum properly or not?
The Curriculum Specialist (NCTB)	What measures have you taken from the NCTB to empower the English teachers that would enable them to teach and assess English reading skill?
	Does NCTB provide the TCG to every English teacher of the country?
	Does NCTB provide/suggest any English reading materials that might form a taste of students for further reading?
	What mechanism do you have to continuously keep the teachers informed about the recurrent changes in curriculum and how to implement it (curriculum)?
The teacher educator (TTC)	What contents do you teach in B.Ed. and during in-service training that may help teachers to teach and assess reading skill better?
	How do the trainees keep in touch with you when they go back to schools after B.Ed. and in-service training? Why do they keep in touch?

Appendix: 8

Sample Test (Question Paper) Prepared by NCTB

Sample Questions
From SSC Examination 2018

English Paper One
Full Marks: 100
Time: 3 hours

(Answer all the questions. Figures in the margin indicate full marks.)

Read the passage. Then answer the questions below.

21 February is a memorable day in our national history. We observe the day every year as International Mother Language Day. The day is a national holiday.

On this day, we pay tribute to the martyrs who laid down their lives to establish Bangla as a state language in undivided Pakistan in 1952. It is known as the Language Movement.

The seed of the Language Movement was sown on 21 March 1948 when Mohammad Ali Zinnah, the then Governor General of Pakistan, at a public meeting in Dhaka declared that Urdu would be the only state language of Pakistan. The declaration raised a storm of protest in the eastern part of the country. The protest continued non-stop, gathering momentum day by day. It turned into a movement and reached its climax in 1952. The government outlawed all sorts of public meetings and rallies to stop it.

The students of Dhaka University defied the law and they brought out a peaceful protest procession on 21 February 1952. When the procession reached near Dhaka Medical College, the police opened fire on the students, killing Salam, Rafiq, Barkat, Safiur and Jabbar. As a result, there were mass protests all over the country and the government had to declare Bengali too as a state language. This kindled the sparks of independence movement of Bangladesh.

1. Choose the correct answer from the following alternatives.   1×7=7

i) 21 February is a memorable day for all the Bangladeshis because this is the day when:

a) Urdu was declared as the only state language of Pakistan.

b) we pay tribute to the martyrs of Liberation War.

c) some great people laid down their lives to establish Bangla as a state language.

d) students protested against Mohammad Ali Zinnah's declaration.

ii) The seed of the Language Movement was sown by:

a) Salam

b) martyrs

c) Zinnah

d) students

iii) The phrase "storm of protest" means:

a) mild protest

b) strong protest

c) moderate protest

d) symbolic protest

iv) The gap between the beginning and the climax of Language Movement

a) 2 years

b) 3 years

c) 4 years

d) 5 years

v) The greatest outcome of Language Movement is:

a) status of Bangla as a state language

b) independence of Bangladesh

c) International Mother Language Day

d) mass protest all over the country

vi) Salam and Barkat were the citizens of

a) Bangladesh

b) Nepal

c) India

d) Pakistan

vii) Pakistani government declared Bangla as a state language because they were

a) compelled to do that

b) requested to do that

c) urged to do that

d) advised to do that

Answers: i) c; ii) c; iii) b; iv) c; v) b; vi) d; vii) a

2. Answer the following questions.   2×5=10

a) Why is 21 February a national holiday?

b) What is "undivided Pakistan"?

c) Why did Pakistani government outlaw meetings and rallies in 1952?

d) Why did police kill Salam, Rafiq, Barkat, Safiur and Jabbar?

e) How is Language Movement related to the independence of Bangladesh?

Suggested Answer:

a) 21 February is a national holiday because on that day in 1952 Rafiq, Salam, Barkat, Safiur and Jabbar laid down their lives to establish Bangla as a state language of the then Pakistan. The holiday is observed in order to pay tribute to the martyrs.

b) "Undivided Pakistan" is the Pakistan before 1971. In 1971 the East Pakistan became independent to be born as a new country—Bangladesh.

c) Pakistani government outlawed meetings and rallies in 1952 in order to stifle the people's voice raised against the declaration of Urdu as the only state language of Pakistan.

d) The moral strength of the students' peaceful procession in support of Bangla as a state language frightened the Pakistani government. Therefore, their police opened fire and killed the processionists—Salam, Rafiq, Barkat, Safiur, and Jabbar.

e) The success of Language Movement succeeded in kindling the sparks of independence movement. The independence movement eventually turned into the liberation war and the Bangalees got a new country- Bangladesh.

3. Read the following text and fill in each gap with a suitable word based on the information of the text. 1×5=5

Everyone wants to share his/ her happiness with near and dear ones. That's why people rush for their homes despite serious hazards. This is called the pull of roots. Do human beings have roots like the trees? The answer is 'yes' though invisible, they lie in our minds. It's the roots that make a bond between us and family members, in-laws, friends, neighbors or even between us and the land where we were born and grew up. Wherever we stay, we have a continuous pull of our roots. It's our roots that

develop our identity, making us what we are. When we lose our bond, we become rootless. Without roots we are non-entity. Such persons are devoid of values, humanity, and social responsibilities. They don't know where they are from and where they are heading towards. This often makes them feel empty and lost. By nature, human being loves a) ___ to share his/her feelings with near and dear ones. This invisible b) ___ for each other lies in our hearts. It always pulls us to c) ___ back to our roots. It develops our identity and d) __ to know who we are. If we deny our roots, we will deny our existence. So, we can't but e) __ our roots.

Suggested Answers:

a. companions/ friends

b. feelings

c. go/come/turn

d. helps/assists

e. nourish/ strengthen

4. Read the passage from the membership of a reading club. Complete the following table with information from the passage.   1X5=5

Pathok Club aims at developing reading habit among community people irrespective of age. It is open 12 hours a day starting from 8:00 am. The subscription fee varies for different age groups. If you are between 5 to 17, you will have the junior membership. It requires Tk. 200 for a 3 month and Tk. 300 for a 6 month memberships. Annual membership, which will allow one additional facility like free entry to the movie show every week, can be obtained for Tk. 600. Membership charges for adult age group (18 to 50) are quarterly Tk. 300 and half yearly Tk. 500. Annual membership charge is Tk. 300 more than the 6 month membership fee and it comes with the

facility to access the movie library. Senior membership is for people above 50 who have to pay Tk. 100 quarterly and Tk. 200 half yearly. Yearly membership for them is Tk. 300, which also allow them free access to the movie library along with home delivery and pick up facilities.

Pathok Club details					
Objective	Cultivating reading habit				
Opening hours	From 8:00 am to (1)…….pm				
Membership type	Age group (in years)	Subscription charge and facilities			
		Quarterly	Half yearly	Annually	Additional Facilities for annual members
(2)………..	5-17	TK. 200	TK. 300	TK. 600	Access to movie show
Adult	18-50	TK. 300	TK. 500	(3) TK. …….	(4) ……..
Senior	(5)……….....	TK. 100	TK. 200	TK. 300	Free access to movie library and home service

Answers:

(1) 8:00 pm

(2) Junior

(3) Tk. 800

(4) Access to the movie library

(5) 50 and above

5. Write a summary of the above passage in your own words.　　10

Suggested Answer:

To grow reading habit in its community, Pathok Club is offering some lucrative memberships where the fee is the lowest for elderly people and the highest for the middle group of 18 to 50. There are three types of membership for each of the junior, adult and senior member groups which are quarterly, half yearly and annual with some extra facilities for the annual membership.

6. Match the parts of sentences given in column ' A ' ' B 'and ' C ' to write five complete sentences.　　　　1×5 = 5

Column A	Column B	Column C
a) Mount Everest which is in	i) George Everest who surveyed	i) the Himalayes in 1841.
b) It was named after an Englishman	ii) Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay reached the top on May 10 and	ii) mountains always look exciting and challenging to them.
c) Climbing mountains like Everest	iii) Mountaineers are not daunted because	iii) is the highest mountain in the world.
d) In spite of all the difficulties and dangers the daring	iv) Is difficult and dangerous because	iv) Have gone into history as the first to conquer the highest mountain in the world.
e) After two months of difficult and dangerous climbing	v) the Himalayan Mountains to the North of India between Tibet and Nepal	v) there is snow all over and there might be snow slides and cracks under the ice and snow.

Answer:

a) Mount Everest which is in the Himalayan Mountains to the North of India between Tibet and Nepal is the highest mountain in the world.

b) It was named after an Englishman George Everest who surveyed the Himalayas in 1841.

c) Climbing mountains like Everest is difficult and dangerous because there is snow all over and there might be snow slides and cracks under the ice and snow.

d) In spite of all the difficulties and dangers the daring mountaineers are not daunted because mountains always look exciting and challenging to them.

e) After two months of difficult and dangerous climbing Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay reached the top on May 10 and have gone into history as the first to conquer the highest mountain in the world.

7. Put the following parts of the story in correct order to make the whole story. Only the corresponding numbers of the sentences need to be written. **1×8 = 8**

a) The fox said, "What a noble advice it is!" Then he carried the turtle to the river and let it go.

b) The fox began to shout, "You are ok, come now, dear. But the turtle raised his neck and said, "Here there are more cunning animals than you."

c) The turtle began to make more distance and by noticing it tears come to the fox's eyes.

d) The shouting of the fox got gradually softer.

e) Once a hungry fox captured a turtle to eat and said, "How hard your body is!"

f) The fox said, "I am here, don't waste my time. Come quick while you are soft enough."

g) The turtle began to dive and make a great distance between them.

h) The cunning turtle said, "Let me go to the river to soften my body."

Answer:

The parts of stories can appear in the following order:

e), h), a), f), g), b), d), c).

8. Answer the following questions to write a paragraph on Global Warming. 10

a) What is global warming?

b) What are the causes of global warming?

c) What are the effects of global warming?

d) What should we do to stop it?

e) Why do we need a green environment?

Suggested Answer:

Global Warming

Global warming is now a major worldwide concern. It is the warming of the air surrounding the earth as a result of heat being trapped by environmental pollution. There are many factors responsible for it. Firstly, the destruction and burning down of tropical rain forests; secondly, traffic that clogs up city streets; thirdly, the rapid growth of industries and the use of CFC; fourthly, the use of detergents. As a result, the world is heating up. However the main culprit is the carbon dioxide gas produced

by the burning of fossil fuels and forests. All these are responsible for global warming as well as climate change. The effects of global warming are very alarming for our life and existence. Because of global warming the temperatures may have risen by as much as 4 (degree) C. It could severely reduce mankind's ability to grow food; destroy wildlife and damage wilderness, raise sea levels and flood coastal areas and farmland. It is a severe threat to our life and existence. So to save the globe and to live a healthy life we should come forward to stop environmental pollution and the emission of greenhouse gases. To ensure a green environment can ensure healthy and danger free life. We all should work hand in hand to save the globe from the harmful effects of climate change.

9. Read the beginning of a story below. Add at least ten sentences to complete the story. 10

It was on the first day of Boishakh. Dulal come out of his house in the morning with all his family members. Their first destination was the Ramna Park. In the park, there were people of all ages. Dulal could see a group of foreigners too. One of them had a camera and he was clicking all the way. All of a sudden, he came near Dulal …………………………………………

Suggested answer:

………………………and in a sweet yet strange voice said, 'Shubho Nababorsho'.

Dulal felt excited. 'who taught you to say that'? asked Dulal. 'I have heard people saying it everywhere in the garden'. The camera-happy man was from Norway. He said, 'Look, we are friends now. I will give you a small book that contains general info about my country. But please tell me about this day. I have visited many places of the world but I have never seen such a festive rally of people'.

'Do you like it'? Dulal asked.

'It's fantastic and exciting'.

Dulal guided the foreigner to the Institute of Fine Arts. The huge new year procession was about to start with all kinds of colorful masks. Dulal started telling the man about the motifs of the masks. All on a sudden, he remembered that his parents must be frantically looking for him. In a nervous tone Dulal said, 'Sorry, I have to go'. Without waiting for the foreigner's response, he started running to Ramna Park to meet his parents.

10. The graph below shows the number of computer owners by gender in a city named 'X' from the year 2012 to 2016. Describe the chart in 150 words. You should highlight and summarise the information given in the chart. **10**
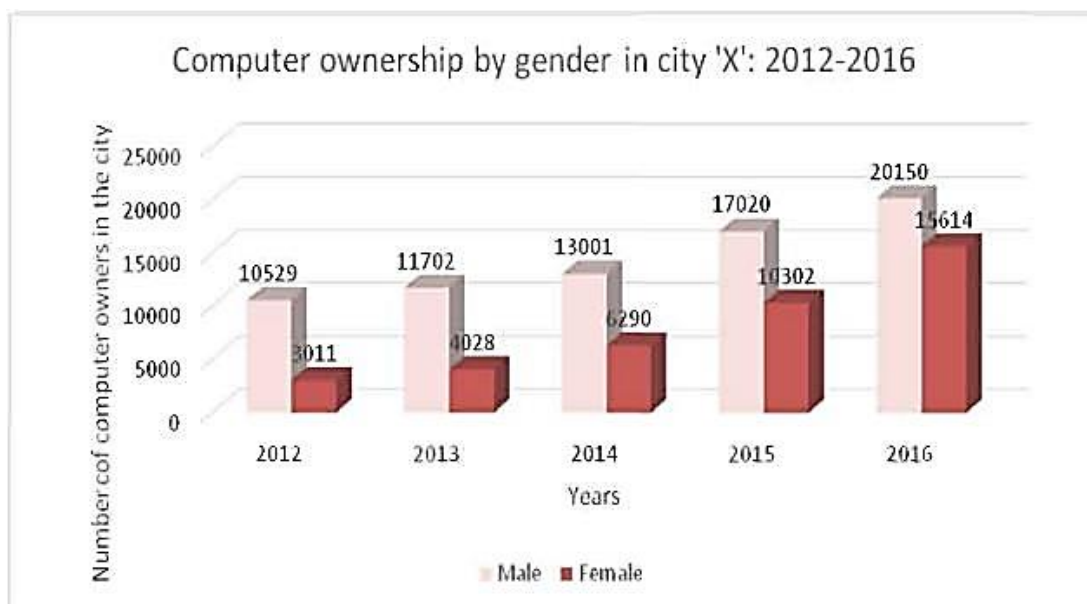
Sample answer:

The graph presents the number of computer users both male and female in the city 'X' over five years from 2012 to 2016. It shows that the popularity of computer among users of both the sexes steadily increased over the span of time.

At the beginning of the time period we see a big difference between the number of male and female computer users of where the male users outnumber the female users three to one. There is a gradual growth in the numbers of both types of users over the years, but the growth is more rapid in the case of female users. The number of male users has doubled over five years, whereas the number of female users is four times more at the end than in the beginning year.

The use of computers is gradually becoming more and more popular among both the sexes, while women are gradually achieving parity with men.

11. Suppose, you are Rayan/Afsana. Yesterday something amazing happened to you which you can't but share with your friend, Abrar/Pranto. Now, write an e-mail to Abrar/Pranto about the incident. **10**

Suggested answer:

To: zahiddrmc@gmail.com

Subject: Sharing patriotism

Dear Pranto,

I know it may not have time to read my mail as you are extremely busy with your study tour. But I believe the story will move you greatly.

Yesterday morning, I was heading towards my school to take an exam in a rickshaw. Everything around was so quiet that I felt a little scared. Om my way, I saw some paper flags lying in the roadside. I remembered that yesterday was 16th December. Suddenly, the grey bearded puller stopped the rickshaw, got down and sprinted down the road. I was so terrified that I couldn't utter a single word. But I noticed that in a minute he returned with those flags. Composing myself, I told him that I was quite moved by his action. Taking a deep breath, he said, "Look, these are the flags for which I fought risking my life. So, I can't allow anyone to step on them." I realized that this patriotic zeal made the victory possible in 1971. My eyes became wet with tears. I believe it's time for all of us to play our part in realising the dreams of our indomitable freedom fighters for which they sacrificed their lives and limbs. Hope to hear from you.

With love

Afsana

12. Farheen is a 15 year old girl. She wants to go to Cox's Bazar with her parents after her final exam. Her father tells her to book rooms in Sea Star Hotel over telephone. Write a short dialogue that Farheen might have with the hotel receptionist. **10**

Suggested answer:

Hotel Receptionist (HR): Good afternoon. This is Hotel Sea Star. How can I help you?

Farheen: I would like to make a hotel reservation.

HR: What day are you going to arrive here?

Farheen: We will be there on the 25th December.

HR: How many rooms do you need?

Farheen: We need two rooms.

HR: Would you like to have double rooms?

Farheen: We need only one double room. The other one should be single.

HR: Sea-side or hill-side?

Farheen: Please make sure that the double room will be a sea-side room. The other one may be hill-side.

HR: How long will you be staying?

Farheen: We need the rooms for 3 nights.

HR: Would you like any smoking room?

Farheen: No, thank you.

HR: Alright. We have booked the rooms for you. Please be sure to arrive before 4.00 pm on your check-in date.

Farheen: Thank you.

HR: You're most welcome.

Appendix: 9

Sample of a Test Used in a School Examination

Half Yearly Examination – 20017

Class: Nine

Subject: English 1st Paper

Time: 3.00 Hours

Full marks: 100

Part: A

Read the passage. Then answer the questions below:

Meherjan lives in slum on the Sirajgonj Town Protection Embankment. Her polythene roofed shelter looks like a cage. She in nearly 45 but looks more than her age. In front of her shelter, she is trying to make a fire to cook the day's only meal. Her weak hands tremble as she adds some fallen leaves and straw to the fire. The whispering wind from the river Jamuna makes the fire unsteady. The dancing of the flames reminds Meherjan of the turmoil in her life. Not long ago Meherjan had everything…. a family, cultivable land and cattle. The erosion of the Jamuna consumed gradually all her landed property. It finally claimed her last shelter during the last monsoon. It took the river only a day to demolish Meher's house, trees, vegetable garden and the bamboo bush, she had a happy family once. Over the years, she lost her husband and her family to diseases that cruel hunger and poverty brought to the family. Now, she is the only one left to live on with the loss and the pain. The greedy Jamuna has shattered her dreams and happiness. There re thousand others waiting to share the same fate with Meherjan. Bangladesh is land of rivers that affect its people. Erosion is a harsh reality for the people living along the river banks. During each monsoon many more villages are threatened by the

roaring of rivers like the Jamuna, the roaring Padma and the Meghna. It is estimated that river erosion makes at least 100,000 people homeless every year in Bangladesh. In fact, river erosion is one of the main dangers caused by climate change. If we can't take prompt actions to adapt to climate change, there will be thousands of more Meherjans in our towns and villages every year.

1. Chose the correct answer from the following alternatives: $1 \times 7 = 7$

(a) Turmoil

      (i) confusion   (ii) violent confusion

      (iii) hazard   (iv) trouble

(b) Erosion

      (i) creation   (ii) annihilation

      (iii) ruination   (iv) the process of being eroded

(c) Once Meherjan was___

      (i) solvent   (ii) insolvent

      (iii) poor   (iv) impoverished

(d) Which of the following best describes the erosion of the people living along the river bank?

      (i) harsh reality   (ii) natural calamity

      (iii) turmoil   (iv) critical issue

(e)   Meherjan's dream are ____ by the Jamuna

      (i) are materialised   (ii) come true

      (iii) are shattered   (iv) fulfilled

(f) All her landed property ____ gradually by the erosion of the Jamuna.

      (i) consumed   (ii) was consumed

(ii) consume   (iv) was protected

(g) Before the erosion of the river, she was

   (i) poor   (ii) frustrated

   (ii) unhappy   (iv) joyful

2. Answer the following questions.   **2 × 5 = 10**

(a) From your reading of the first paragraph why Meherjan looks more than her age?

(b) "The dancing flames reminds Meherjan of the turmoil in her life." Explain in 2/3 sentences.

(c) What happens to the villages near rivers during the monsoon? Describe in brief.

(d) Briefly describe how the erosion of the Jamuna gradually consumed all her properly.

(e) Do you agree with the view that we should take prompt action to adopt to climate change?

Give reasons for your answer.

3. Read the following text and fill in each gaps with a suitable word based on the information of the text.   **1 × 5 = 5**

Yoga is a kind of pasture and breathing exercise. It brings together both physical and mental disciplines to archive peace of body and mind, helping you relax and manage stress and anxiety. Traditional Yoga puts emphasis on behavior, diet and meditation. But if you're just looking for better stress management and not entire lifestyle change- yoga to complex activities for practitioners. However all practitioners do not necessarily need the same kind of practice.

Yoga is one kind of (a) _____. It brings together both physical and mental disciplines to archive peace of body and mind. It helps us relax and manage as (b) _____. As anxiety. Traditional yoga emphasis on behavior, diet and mediation. On the (c) _____ hard, if we are just looking for stress management in a better way and not an entire life style change, yoga can still help no (d) _____. At first, yoga trainers choose easier activities for practitioners do not necessarily need the same kinds of practice.

4. Read the following text and fill in the table with the information given in the passage. $1 \times 5 = 5$

Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar was born to Thankurdas Bandyapadhay and Bhagavati Devi at Birsingha village to Pachim Madirapor District, India on 26 September 1820. He was a philosopher, academic, educator, writer, translator, reformer and philanthropist. His guest to study under street light as it was not possible for him to afford a gas lamp at home. G=He joined the Sanskrit College, Kolkata and studied there twelve long years and passed out of the college in 1841. In the year 1839 successfully cleared him law examination. He joined Fort William College a head of the Sanskrit Department in 1841. In 1446 he left Fort William College and joined the Sanskrit College as Assistant Secretary. In 1851 he became the principal of the college.

He was a very kind hearted man. He was known for his charity and philosophy as 'Dayar-sagar'. He introduced the practice of widow significant day to Bengali and Sanskrit Literature. His important, Badhaday, Upakramanika, Sanskrit Badhabay Bishayak Prostab etc. He died on 29 July 1891 in Kolkata.

Biography of Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar					
Known as	Philosopher, academic, educator, writer, translator, reformer and philanthropist				
Life span	From 26 September 1820 to (i) _____				
Who	What	Even/activity	Time/When	Place/ Where	Position
Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar	Professional life	joined	(ii) _____	Fort William College	head of Sanskrit Department
Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar	(iii) _____	Joined	in 1846	The Sanskrit College	(iv) _____
Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar	Professional life	become	in 1851	(v) _____	the principal

5. Write a summary of the passage is not more than 90 to 100 words. **10**

6. Match the parts of sentences given is column A with B and column C to write five complete sentences. **1 × 5 = 5**

Column A	Column B	Column C
(a) The common form	(i) have shifted to town	(i) in the rural areas of Kenya
(b) But things are changing	(ii) of marriage in Kenya	(ii) was polygamy in the past
(c) The polygamous	(iii) can still be found	(iii) to earn livelihood

marriage		
(d) Many polygamous family	(iv) because of modern	(iv) outlook of Kenyans
(e) Many Kenyans	(v) is yielding to new	(v) practice of monogamy

7. Put the following parts of the story in correct order to rewrite the whole story.

1×8=8

(a) He ran an in front of them.

(b) They picked a bunch for their mother.

(c) They barked at it loudly.

(d) They took their dog Sammy with them.

(e) Sammy knew the way very well for he had been there before.

(f) Carol and Her little sister went for a walk in the woods.

(g) The children found some bluebells growing in the woods.

(h) Sammy saw a rabbit while they were doing this.

Part: B

**8. Answer the following questions to write a paragraph on "A Book Fair".   10**

(a) What is a book fair?

(b) When and where is it held?

(c) What types of books are available in the fair?

(d) What types of stalls are found in the fair other than book stalls?

(e) Who are the visitors in the fair?

(f) What types of programs are arranged in the fair?

(g) How does a book help a man?

9. Read the beginning of a story. Write ten new sentences to complete the story. 10

It was a hot day in summer. There was scorching heat of the sun ………………….

10. The pie chart below shows the passing rate of different subjects in class eight in the first terminal exam of 2013 in Saint Martin High School, Teknaf. Write a paragraph and the pie chart and give a title to it.
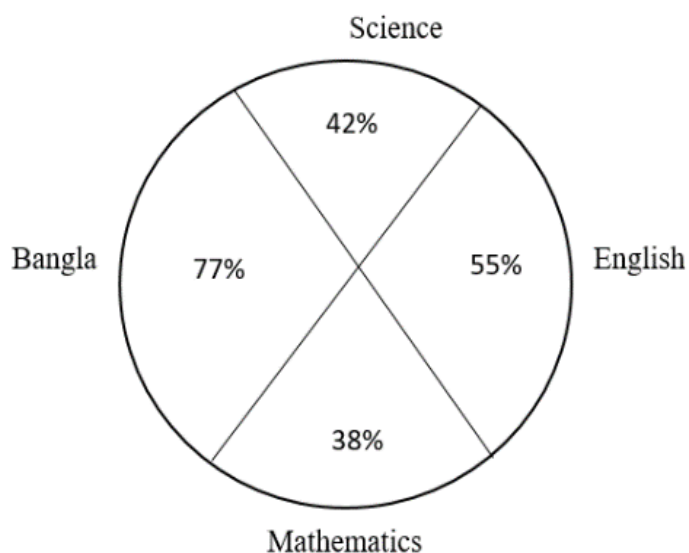
11. Suppose you are Manik, Your school is rich in co-curricular activities. Your Friend Nafiz wants to know about your school. Now, write a letter to him describing the co-curricular activities of your school.   10

12. Write a dialogue between you and your friend on the use and abuses of mobile phone.   10

Appendix: 10

Guidelines for Question Setters and Markers for English

1. Multiple Choice Questions (MCQ)

MCQ can be set for testing a number of strategies and skills related to reading such as scanning, skimming, reading for gist, inferencing (guessing the meaning from the context) comprehension check etc. Each MCQ item will carry ½ mark. However, depending on the level of difficulty some items may have 1 mark as well.

In preparing MCQ item, question setters will make sure that learners have to apply certain skills or strategies of reading in order to be able to choose the right options. Depending on the level of the learners, items will be set to test learners' lower order thinking skills (knowing and understanding) as well as higher order and more critical thinking (analysing, synthesising, and evaluating). Use synonyms in the questions to avoid quoting directly from the original passage. Make the questions a bit round about so that learners think.

For example:

Text: The Great Wall of China, one of the greatest wonders of the world, was first built between 220-206 BC.

Question: When was the Great Wall first built? (Don't make this type of question. Student will just get the answer from the question paper as 'was born' is common in both the text in the question paper and the answer.)

Question: What is the initial construction period of the Great Wall? (This question is Okay as learners has to understand that 'was built' and 'construction period' are same.)

Students will write the question number and then write only a/b/c/d that refers to the correct answer. Whole sentence from the question paper is not required.

The same text can be used for guessing the meaning from the context and Question Answer (open ended and close ended). However, the same text **cannot** be used for Question-Answer and True/False. Depending on difficulty level and text length, information transfer and True/False questions can be set from the same text or from two different texts. Two different texts are preferred to a single text.

Please note the following points while setting MCQ test items:

- Phrase stems as clearly as possible. Confusing questions can generate wrong answers from students who do understand the material.

- Avoid redundant words and phrases in the stem. Extraneous details make a question more complex and less reliable.

- Include any language in the stem that you would have to repeat in each answer option.

- Options should be similar in length and structure.

- The number of answer options should not be more than four.

- Distracters must be incorrect, but plausible. Try to include among the distracters options that contain common errors.

- To make distracters more plausible, use words that is familiar to students.

- If a recognisable key word appears in the correct answer, it should appear in some or all of the distracters as well. Don't let a verbal clue decrease the validity of your exam.

- Avoid using extreme or vague words in the answers. Use rarely extreme words like *all, always* and *never* or vague words or phrases like *usually, typically* and *may be* in the answers.

- Avoid using *All of the above* or *None of the above* as an answer choice.

In designing MCQs the following class wise guidelines have to be followed.

MCQ for grades 6 and 7

Altogether 10 MCQs will be set. Each MCQ will have ½ mark (half mark) for a correct answer. There should be 6 MCQs on vocabulary test (guessing meaning from the context) and 4 MCQs on answering questions (scanning for specific information, search reading, deducing the meaning of unfamiliar words). Thus the marks distribution will be:

Vocabulary ½ × 6 = 3

Questions ½ × 4 = 2

Total = 5

MCQ for grade 8

As given in NCTB Sample Question.

MCQ for grades 9-10

Altogether 7 MCQs will be set. Each MCQ will have 1 mark for a correct answer. There will be 2 MCQs on vocabulary test (guessing meaning from the context and inferencing) and 5 MCQs on answering questions (skimming, reading for main ideas and supporting details, reading to infer meaning). Thus the marks distribution will be:

Thus the marks distribution will be:

Vocabulary 1×2 = 2

Questions 1×5 = 5

Total = 7

2. True/False

True-false questions are typically used to measure the ability to identify whether statements of fact are correct. The questions are usually a declarative statement that the student must judge as true or false.

Follow the general guidelines below while writing True/False items for your students:

- Base the item on a single idea.

- Write items that test an important idea.

- Avoid lifting statements right from the text.

- Make the statements a brief as possible.

- Write clearly true or clearly false statements.

- Try to avoid such words as *all, always, never, only, nothing*, and *alone*.

- The use of words like *more, less, important, unimportant, large, small, recent, old, tall, great,* and so on, can easily lead to ambiguity.

- State items positively. Negative statements may be difficult to interpret. This is especially true of statements using the double negative. If a negative word, such as "not" or "never," is used, be sure to underline or capitalise it.

- Beware of detectable answer patterns.

3. Matching

There is no need of a separate reading text for matching. The question itself will have a context after the texts in part A and part B are properly matched. The numbering of texts in column A can be i. ii. iii, iv ….. and the texts in column B can be a, b, c, d…….. Students only need to match the numbering in the two columns, e.g i, ii, iii, iv etc. (in column A) and a, b. c. d etc. (in column B). You can also use 3 columns with texts to match.

4. Gap filling with or without clues

The text in the gap filling activity is separate and complete. The text for this item will have a meaningful context too. There will be five gaps in the text. The gaps can be used for article, preposition, or any other parts of speech without verb as there is separate test for it. A question setter will choose one particular item mentioned earlier to set a question and use a gap at the particular place. For example, if the question setter wants to test the article then there will be a gap at the position of a, an, the or before a noun that does not take any article. For a question of 3 marks, there will be six gaps in the text; for 4, there will be 8 gaps; and for 5 marks there will be ten gaps.

Follow the guidelines while writing gap filling test items:

- Prepare a scoring key that contains all acceptable answers for each item.

- Prefer single word or short phrase answers.

- Beware of open questions that invite unexpected but reasonable answers.

- Make all the blanks of an equal length.

- Avoid grammatical clues such as "an."

- Place the blanks near the end of the statement. Try to present a complete or nearly complete statement before calling for a response.

- Limit the number of blanks to one or two per sentence. Statements with too many blanks waste time as students figure out what is being asked.

- If a numerical answer is called for, indicate the units (e.g. currency) in which it is to be expressed.

5. Cloze test with/without clues

A cloze test is a fill-in-the-blank activity that assesses students' comprehension of vocabulary and reading passages or knowledge of grammatical items. In cloze tests there are recurrent gaps at every 4th, 5th, 6th or 7th word. If the first gap, for example, is used at the 5th place, all through the text the gap will be at the 5th place. Unlike the gap filling activity that tests a particular grammar item (e.g. preposition, article, pronoun, or verb) it is a test for vocabulary (key words) in general. This is why gap filling activity in the reading section is usually a cloze test. In contrast, gap filling activity is a merely a grammar test item.

A cloze test with 5 marks will have ten gaps (.5 for each gap). Considering the level of difficulty cloze tests without clues at grade 10 can have 5 gaps (1 mark for each gap).

In answering the question, an examinee does not need to reproduce the text in the answer script. Writing the missing word with the corresponding question number is enough. However, the whole text with suitable words in the gaps will neither earn any extra credit or discredit.

6. Information Transfer

Depending on the level of difficulty and length of the text, information transfer and True/False questions can be set from the same text. However, if the text is too small, **do not** use the same text for both the tests as the content will be inadequate for setting questions. Make sure there is no overlapping or repetitions in the question you have set. Alternatively you can use two different texts for these two test items.

The marks allocated for information transfer is 1X5 =5 or 0.5X10=5 (depending on the level of difficulty)

7. Substitution table

It's a grammar test item. It tests whether students can make grammatically correct sentences following any particular structure/s. It's different from matching item. In matching there might be equal number of texts in each column in a table and students need to make sentences using a text from each column. In designing the test item, the question setter can write the texts in Column A in a way so that the sequential arrangement of the text makes a context. In a substitution table, depending on marks, there will be 4 or 5 texts in the left column, 1 or 2 grammar words that shows the form in the middle column, and extensions at the right column. Each meaningful sentence made using the texts and the lexical word will have credit.

8. Gap filling with right forms of verbs

Sentences will be written in context in the question paper. Some verbs could be omitted or given in brackets without any form. If the verbs are totally omitted in the text, a list of verbs will be supplied in a box separately. Students' job will be to use the verb at the gaps in their correct forms according to the context and other grammatical

considerations. Alternatively base form of verbs can also be supplied in the body of the text in parenthesis.

Students will write only the right answers with the question number. However, if anyone uses the text with words at the gaps, it should be accepted as correct answer.

9. Changing sentences

A text will be designed with a certain context. Some of the sentences in the text will have instructions in the parenthesis on how to change them. Depending on the marks in the test item, students will be asked to change 5 or 10 sentences. Students will write only the changed sentence as their answers. They can write the changed sentences in any order but must use the correct number used for each sentence in the given text.

10. Rearranging

Rearranging measures students' ability to organise some detached sentences into a coherent and cohesive text. Use 10 detached sentences for classes 6, 7, and 8 (See the sample questions for these grades.). For SSC, Ss will rearrange eight parts of a story/passage (See the sample question for SSC.). Test your test item (with someone else or you sit for a test) to check whether the sequence of the answer vary. If the answer varies and each variety has a complete meaning, redesign the test. Use linking words/sentence connectors to maintain cohesion and coherence in the text. Learners do not need to reproduce the text in their answer scripts. If they arrange the corresponding serial of the texts correctly (such as b. d. a, f or v, iii, vi. i … etc), they will get full credit. **Please remember that the test objective here is the organisation of sentences, not the copying of texts from the question paper.** However if any learner comes with sentences written in a random text, there is no

need to penalise him/her. Students will get credits for the correct answers. For example, if the answer is like this:

a. × b. √ c. √ d. × e. √ f. √ g. × h. × i. √ j. × the student will get 5 marks.

The test has no relation with the texts used in the previous test items.

11. Writing summary

Use a text not exceeding 150 to 200 words for classes 6 to 8 and not exceeding 300 words for classes 9-10 in the question paper. Learners will produce a summary using one third words of the given text. For an example, if the original text has 150 words, learners will produce the summary in 50 words. However, 5% plus minas is okay. This answer should be written in random texts not in isolated sentences. There is no question of counting number of sentences in summary. So DO Not mention in the question paper how many lines or sentences learners will use to make a summary. The number of words used here is important. Make sure that they are writing in their own words, not copying some sentences from the text. Practice them to avoid examples or explanations in writing a summary. A fresh text should be given to make summary. No text used in the previous test items can be used here.

12. Writing a paragraph answering questions

Make sure while answering questions your students will be guided to write a well structured paragraph. In other words, if the students answer the questions properly, there will be a paragraph of a befitting topic sentence followed by arguments/ideas to support the topic sentence and a conclusion to summarise what has been told in the topic sentence and the body. There cannot be any new ideas in the conclusion. However, if there are 5 questions to answer, it does not mean that students will write

only five sentences. They will use sentences as per their discretion but the paragraph as a whole answer the questions. If there are 10 marks for this item, learners should be able to make at least 10 sentences. The word limit for classes 6-7 is 150 words, for class 8, it is 170 words, and for 9-10 it is 200 words at least.10% plus minus can be accepted. Keep an eye on the content rather than the mechanical calculation of sentences. **Assess the paragraph from different aspects such as grammar, ideas, organisation of ideas, communication, punctuation, and spelling**. Do not assess the paragraph from the perspective of grammar accuracy only. Regarding the composition writing in Paper 2 (which is structurally an essay) the word limit will be 250 for classes 6-7, 300 for class 8, and 350 for 9-10.

13. Completing a story

There will be the beginning of a story in the question paper. Students will continue the story and complete it. The answer will vary here. Completing a story when given at classes 6-8 should be more guided (See sample question for classes 6-7) where question setter not only begins a story but also provides with some clues for the extension of ideas. Students will complete the story following the clues. A good idea is to mention the word limit when there is no clues for the students. Assess the paragraph from different aspects such as grammar, ideas, communication, organisation etc.; do not only assess the paragraph only from the perspective of grammar accuracy. Moreover, use of cohesion (inter-connectedness of the sentences) and coherence (transition from one idea to another idea) are important here. Word limit here will be similar to paragraph writing.

14. Open-Ended Questions

Open ended or essay format questions are excellent for measuring higher level cognitive learning and overall comprehension of a reading text/passage. They allow the student to select content for their response, to organise their thoughts in a logical manner and to present their ideas on a given subject matter. Overall, these types of test questions allow teachers to test student's broader understanding of a reading item.

When writing good open-ended questions, keep the following guidelines in mind:

- Be sure that the test question clearly states the answer that you are seeking from the student. For example, "Discuss the outcomes of environment pollution" is a poor test question. But, worded as "Describe the potential impacts of the environment pollution on the people of coastal regions in Bangladesh" or, what are the causes and impacts of environmental pollution on the people of coastal regions in Bangladesh? is a better test question as it clearly gives the student something to compare and contrast within a focused area.

- If you are looking to test comprehension, a good opening line for the test question is, 'Explain the following..."

- If you are seeking to test the student's ability to analyse a concept, a good opening phrase for your test question is, 'compare and contrast....."

- Don't give students the option to pick 2 or 3 questions from among 5. This can add confusion for the students and complexity for the teacher when grading for a classroom. This type of test format often compromises with validity and reliability of the test.

- Here you are setting recalling questions, design the question in a way so that examinees do not have opportunity to pick answers by matching the vocabulary in the question and answer.

Question setters have to go by the following class-wise guidelines in setting questions.

Grades 6-7

There will be 5 open ended questions each bearing 2 marks for the correct answer. There will be 2 questions for recalling answer, 2 questions to check students' understanding, and 1 question for analysing information.

Grade 8

There will be 5 open ended questions each bearing 2 marks for the correct answer. There will be 2 questions for recalling answer, 2 questions to check students' understanding, and 1 question for analysing information.

Grade 9-10

There will be 5 open ended questions each bearing 2 marks for the correct answer. There will be 1 question to recall answer, 3 questions to check students' understanding, 1 question for analysing information or evaluating something.

A list of action verbs according to Bloom's Taxonomy for lower order and higher order thinking questions are supplied here to be used while designing the test items.

Remembering/recalling: describe, define, list, locate, tell

Understanding: describe, classify, discuss, explain, identify, select, translate, predict

Analysing: solve, use, interpret, sketch, illustrate, classify, differentiate, organise, relate, identify, categorise, compare, contrast, construct, distinguish, explain,

Evaluating: argue, defend, judge, select, support, value, critique, assess, justify

Creating: construct, develop, investigate, design, imagine, justify

(for more information please visit: http://cft.vanderbitt.edu/guides-sub-pages/blooms-taxonomy/)

15. Dialogue writing

A dialogue in real situation is an exchange of information. This has to be reflected in the dialogue written by the test giver. A dialogue **cannot** be a mere combination of fragmented sentences or snappy phrases or collocations like *Hi/Hello/Yes/No/Very good/Thank you/Welcome/See you/Bye etc*. There must be some questions and answers in full sentences. A dialogue has to contain at least 5 questions and their answers or 10 exchange of statements including some questions in full sentences other than greetings.

16. Writing letters/e-mails

If it is an informal letter, content is important. If it is a formal letter, both content and form are important. Formal letter can be written either in British style (each paragraph indented at the beginning for one space, date at the upper right hand corner, name at the right hand corner at the bottom). It can also be written in American style (All paragraphs in a line without indenting, date name everything at the left hand corner). Picture of an envelope or stamp is not needed but address can be written. Yet, if any student provides them - it will not earn any extra credit or penalty.

For e-mails, student must write the e-mail id, subject, and content as written in a genuine email. Students should be taught in the class that there should be a considerable margin at the answer script. However, there should not be any penalty for any examinee if the answer script has no margin. Margin has nothing to do with assessment of the answer.

Word limit should be mentioned in the question paper. Again the word limit is 150 words for classes 6-7, 170 words for class 8, and 200 for classes 9-10 with 10% plus minus.

17. Describing graphs and charts

Graph should be authentic. Teachers may collect charts from various sources such as newspapers, magazines, books or from the internet. Alternatively, teachers can use authentic data and make simple charts by themselves. Describing a graph or chart needs certain language abilities. The graph and chart presented in the textbook show that. A marker of answer scripts should keep an eye whether those languages are used or not. Answers will include the written presentation of data shown in the graph followed by a concluding remark. A question setter should mention the word limit for describing the graph or chart. Do not ask students to produce any graph on the answer sheet. They will only describe it.

Appendix: 11

Ministry of Education GO for Study

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
শিক্ষা মন্ত্রণালয়
অধিশাখা-৮
www.moedu.gov.bd

নং-৩৭.০০.০০০০.০৬৯.৩২.০০৩.২০১৩/   তারিখ ঃ ৩০ মাঘ, ১৪২০ বাংলা
                                                           ১২ ফেব্রুয়ারী, ২০১৩ খ্রিঃ

আদেশ

বিসিএস (সাধারণ শিক্ষা) ক্যাডারের নিম্নবর্ণিত কর্মকর্তাগণের নামের পার্শ্বে বর্ণিত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে নিম্নবর্ণিত শর্তে পিএইচডি (খন্ডকালীন) কোর্সে ভর্তির অনুমতি প্রদান করা হলোঃ

ক্রমিক নং	নাম, পদবী ও কর্মস্থল	কোর্সের নাম, শিক্ষা বর্ষ, বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের নাম
১।	জনাব এমডি আলমগীর হোসেন (০০০৫১) অধ্যাপক (ব্যবস্থাপনা) সরকারি বাঙলা কলেজ, ঢাকা।	পিএইচডি(খন্ডকালীন) (২০০৯-২০১০) আমেরিকান ওয়ার্ল্ড ইউনিভার্সিটি, ক্যালিফোর্নিয়া 'ইউ এস এ' এর অধীন বাংলাদেশ স্টাডি সেন্টার, ১৭, তক্করমইল, ঢাকা-১০০০
২।	মোঃ সাইফুদ্দীন এমরান (০১৭১৪৩) প্রভাষক (বাংলা) জয়পুরহাট সরকারি মহিলা কলেজ, জয়পুরহাট।	পিএইচডি(খন্ডকালীন) (২০১৩-২০১৪) জাহাঙ্গীরনগর বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, সাভার, ঢাকা।
৩।	জনাব রঞ্জিত পোদ্দার (৮৫৫৫) সহকারী অধ্যাপক (ইংরেজি) সরকারি টিচার্স ট্রেনিং কলেজ, ফরিদপুর।	পিএইচডি(খন্ডকালীন) (২০১৩-২০১৪) শিক্ষা ও গবেষণা ইনস্টিটিউট, ঢাকা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, ঢাকা।
৪।	খান আব্দুল্লাহ আসাদ (০১৩৫০৩) সহকারী অধ্যাপক (রাষ্ট্রবিজ্ঞান) ঢাকা কলেজ, ঢাকা (সংযুক্ত) বিশেষ ভারপ্রাপ্ত কর্মকর্তা, মাউশি, ঢাকা।	পিএইচডি(খন্ডকালীন) (২০১৩-২০১৪) জাহাঙ্গীরনগর বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, সাভার, ঢাকা।

শর্তসমূহ ঃ

ক. তারা নিজেরা খরচে পিএইচডি কোর্সটি সম্পন্ন করবেন;

খ. খন্ডকালীন গবেষক হিসেবে পিএইচ.ডি কোর্সটি অধ্যয়নের অজুহাতে কলেজে পাঠদান কিংবা দায়িত্ব পালনরত প্রতিষ্ঠানে স্বাভাবিক সরকারি দায়িত্ব পালনে বিঘ্ন ঘটাতে কিংবা দায়িত্ব পালনে বিরত থাকতে পারবেন না;

গ. কেবলমাত্র মৌখিক পরীক্ষার অংশগ্রহণের দিন ব্যতিত অধ্যয়নের অজুহাতে খন্ডকালীন গবেষককে কোন ছুটি প্রদান করা যাবে না;

ঘ. উচ্চতর ডিগ্রী অধ্যয়নকালীন সময়ে গবেষণার বিষয়টিকে অন্যত্র বদলীর অজুহাত হিসেবে ব্যবহার করা যাবে না;

ঙ. যথাসময়ে কোর্স সমাপ্তির পর কোর্স সমাপনের প্রতিবেদন ও সার্টিফিকেটের কপি মন্ত্রণালয়ে দাখিল করতে হবে;

চ. স্ব-স্ব ক্ষেত্রে গবেষণার পাশাপাশি গবেষণার বিষয়বস্তু যথাসম্ভব দেশের প্রয়োজনে অর্থাৎ জাতীয় উন্নয়নের সাথে সংশ্লিষ্ট বিষয়ের ভিত্তিতে নির্ধারণ করতে হবে।

২। এ আদেশ যথাযথ কর্তৃপক্ষের অনুমোদনক্রমে জারী করা হল।

                                          স্বাক্ষরিত/-
                                     (মালেকা থারুলন্নেছা)
                                        উপ-সচিব
                                        ফোন-৯৫৭০৬৬৩

মহাপরিচালক
মাধ্যমিক ও উচ্চ শিক্ষা অধিদপ্তর, শিক্ষা ভবন, ঢাকা।

নং-৩৭.০০.০০০০.০৬৯.৩২.০০৩.২০১৩/ ২১৬/২(৮)   তারিখ ঃ ৩০ মাঘ, ১৪২০ বাংলা
                                                             ১২ ফেব্রুয়ারী, ২০১৩ খ্রিঃ

অবগতি ও প্রয়োজনীয় কার্যার্থে অনুলিপি প্রেরণ করা হলঃ

১। উপাচার্য, জাহাঙ্গীরনগর বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, সাভার, ঢাকা।
২। পরিচালক, ক্যানবেইস, পলাশী নীলক্ষেত, ঢাকা।
৪। অধ্যক্ষ, ...
৫। প্রধান হিসাব রক্ষণ কর্মকর্তা, শিক্ষা মন্ত্রণালয়, ৪৫, পুরানা পল্টন,ঢাকা।
৬। সিনিয়র সিস্টেম এনালিস্ট, শিক্ষা মন্ত্রণালয়, ঢাকা।
     (ওয়েব সাইটে প্রকাশের জন্য অনুরোধ করা হলো)
৭। জেলা/উপজেলা হিসাব রক্ষণ কর্মকর্তা, ...
৮। জনাব ....

                                                   ১২/২/১৫
                                             (মালেকা থারুলন্নেছা)
                                                   উপ-সচিব

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