

## Adoption and Adaptation of Language Learning Materials in Pre-schools in Bangladesh: Is There any Policy?

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**Abstract:** This study focuses on the language learning materials used at pre-schools in Bangladesh. It is an attempt to shed light on the scenario of adoption and adaptation of language materials in urban pre-schools. Through this qualitative study, document (textbooks of pre-school) analysis and FGD among the pre-school teachers have been conducted and descriptive analysis has been done. Finally, the study shows whether the existing materials are appropriate for the pre-school learners and whether teachers enjoy any privilege in adoption and adaptation of language learning materials.

### Introduction

In Bangladesh pre-school education is not a new phenomenon. In the government level, the idea of pre-school is rather contemporary with limited focus on Bangla and Mathematics (Nath, 2006). In private sector, especially the last two decades witnessed the mushrooming of pre-school provision in the name of English medium and Kindergarten established by personal initiative or NGOs all over the country in Bangladesh 'without following any national standard' (Nath, 2006 : 1). In urban side, almost every area hosts one or more than one pre-school. These pre-schools offer toddlers different levels of education labeled as play group, nursery, Kg-i, Kg-ii which take four years of schooling before any toddler goes to primary school. As these pre-schools are not governed by any government authority, there is hardly any step to bring uniformity in the curriculum of these pre-schools. As a matter of fact, most of these pre-schools follow their own curriculum (or borrowed curriculum) and so, materials, teaching techniques,

learning activities, text books vary from school to school (Nath, 2008 : IX). In most of the schools, printed text books (which are available in the market) are used as language learning materials. As there is no particular guideline or policy for the adoption or adaptation of the materials, every school applies its own policy (market availability, following the other renowned school, financial gain from the publisher, price of the text, illustration, printing quality and so on) in adopting and adapting the text (learning materials) for teaching in pre-schools. So, this is an important area to focus on to find out whether there is any pitfall regarding language learning materials in the teaching-learning situation of the most delicate learners in Bangladesh.

### Research Problem

Children are very delicate in their early age, and at this period they need special care and attention for proper and smooth rearing up. For their survival and socialization in the midst of a social environment, children's learning starts as soon as they are born. First Language (L1) acquisition is a very important experience for the children from their early part of life. Nowadays, children are often sent to pre-school at an early age before they enter into the main stream of primary section. At pre-school actually children's formal language learning starts. Besides, pre-school learning helps learners to be competent to cope with the further journey of learning by the proper development of the learners' cognition, motivation, social adjustment and so on (Schweinhart, Barnes, Weikart, 1993; Campbell & Ramey, 1994; Reynolds et al., 1996; Ou, 2003). Moreover, there are a good number of schools providing pre-school service (Nath, 2006). For the learners, all these pre-schools follow different language learning texts published by different publishers without any monitoring by any central body (*ibid*). Now this problematic area is addressed in this article to bring to light whether the texts used as language learning material for the pre-school learners are appropriate or not. Since there is not any monitoring body, it is an important query to investigate whether there is any policy for the selection of appropriate language learning materials for the delicate children of the concerned level.

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### Purpose of the Study

This study seeks to focus on the issue of the Bengali texts selected by the pre-school authorities in urban areas of Bangladesh. One of the queries is to bring to light if there are anomalies in the pre-school language learning materials. Another query is to find out whether the pre-schools follow any guideline in adopting and adapting the language learning materials.

### Research Questions

1. To what extent are pre-school language learning materials appropriate?
2. Are the teachers privileged to adopt and adapt language learning materials for the pre-schools?

### Theoretical Framework

#### *Pre-primary School and Its Importance*

Nowadays, children are sent to pre-school in an early age before they enter into the main stream of the primary section. Scholars and researchers say in favor of sending children school early since early schooling promotes cognitive development, social adjustment and preparation for further education. In this regard, Chowdhury (2008: iv) says, "Pre-primary Education has a positive correlation with further learning. Moreover, pre-primary education has a strong impact on quality education. It can provide all necessary support to the young children for their development in physical, cognitive, linguistic social and emotional dimensions." So, institutional learning starts and likely plays a very significant role in the overall learning process of the learners and therefore, obviously plays a significant role in the learning of L1. Giving emphasis on the early schooling for the proper development of language, Encyclopedia of Children's Health Program defines 'Preschool' as:

Preschool is an early childhood program in which children combine learning with play in a program run by professionally trained adults. Children are most commonly enrolled in pre-school between the ages of three and five, though those as young as two can attend some schools. Pre-schools are different from traditional daycare in that their emphasis is on learning and development rather than enabling parents to work or pursue other activities... (Encyclopedia of Children's Health Program, 2017 : 1)

The importance of preschool is stated in the following way in "Guide to the Pre-primary Curriculum":

Pre-primary education is an important stage which lays the foundation for life-long learning and whole person development, and serves as the starting point of formal education. It articulates with primary, secondary and tertiary education to form an entire spectrum of education... (Guide to the Pre-primary Curriculum, 2006 : 6)

The time-span from birth to 8 years namely, 'critical period' is the most significant phase for the development of the brain and therefore, this period is marked as an important part for learning of human beings (*ibid*). With the 'abundant sensory stimulation' from appropriate environment in early age of childhood, children have exact brain development helpful for learning for later part in life (Guide to the Pre-primary Curriculum, 2006 : 6)

Preschool Teaching and Learning Standard (2014 : 5) conspicuously gives emphasis on the importance of learning of early age as a base for the ultimate learning of the prospective age and stages :

Childhood experiences can have long-lasting implications for the future. The earliest years of schooling can promote positive developmental experiences and independence while also optimizing learning and development. (Pre-school Teaching and Learning Standards, 2014 : 5)

Giving further importance to early schooling Preschool Teaching and Learning Standard (2014:2) again mentions :

The aim of pre-school education exposure to young children is not only to stir, help, encourage and uphold their apparent skills but also to expand and promote little children's acquiring new knowledge by helping them build a strong base for ensuring their attainment at present and at future.

#### *Material and Its Importance*

*Activities of Text and Materials:* According to Cunningsworth (1984), all language teachers use published materials to ease the learning of language of the learners at some point of their teaching experience. According to Tomlison (1998:2), by 'language learning materials' people usually mean course books. But this term should not be so narrowed down; rather it refers to whatever thing adopted by the teachers and the students as a learning tool (*ibid*). McDonough and Shaw (2003:59) classify two categories of situations like, 'open-market

situation' where teachers select texts in accordance with their own preference and on the other hand, another situation where Ministry of Education produces and delivers texts to the teachers. They add that the evaluation of the texts in both types of situations is very much crucial (McDonough and Shaw, 2003 : 67).

Tomlison (1998: IX) defines a text book as the core material for a course and further says: "Reading material or learning material in general is a supporting aid to help the learners acquire a language smoothly." Material in the form of a text book tries to focus on different language development issues. About particularly language learning text, Tomlison (1998) says :

It aims at to provide as much as possible in one book and is designed so that it could serve as the only book which the learners necessarily use during a course. Such a book usually includes word for grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, functions and the skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking. (p. IX)

In connection with the assessment of the qualities of the text book, Garinger (2002) proposes the following key questions :

1. Do the questions and the activities of the textbook contribute to learners' language acquisition?
2. Are the Exercises balanced in their format, containing both control and free practice?
3. Are the exercises progressive as the students move through the textbook?
4. Are the exercises varied and challenging?

Cunnigsworth (1995:117) prefers the realistic situation based activities. On the other hand, Harmer (1991 : 16-17) proposes that the text activities should facilitate the development of the learners' all the four skills of language. Jacobs and Ball (1996:99-101) support those activities in the texts which aid the learners to understand the meaning, and only understanding meaning will help learners to engage themselves in practicing the language.

*The importance of appropriate pre-school material selection:* Selection of appropriate reading material for young children is very important since materials are the means by which the learners are facilitated to

learn in a better way. In fact, early learning paves the way for future learning base (Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards (2014 : 2). Grasping the issue of material selection for preschool learners as a serious issue, Infant Toddlers Material Guide, (2015) mention the following important issues for the selection of preschool materials :

#### Equipment and Materials to Support Learning

- Extend children's learning by introducing new ideas and materials.
  - Model pro-social behavior.
  - Support children's problem solving efforts.
  - Encourage children to share ideas and experiences with other children as well as with the teacher.
  - Engage children in conversation and by asking open ended questions (questions that have no one correct answer).
  - Observe children's skills, development and interests.
  - Record observations to use in planning and documentation.
- (Infant Toddlers Material Guide, 2015 : 4-5)

The learning materials for young learners should be such as will encourage learners to active participation in the learning process. In other words, the learning materials must be interesting to them. The National Institute for Early Education Research mentions that 'teaching activities and classroom' in preschool will ensure the following aspects :

- opportunities to learn persistence when working at tasks, direction following, and good listening skill
- focus on language and literacy skills, as well as interactive book reading
- emphasis on teaching children problem-solving skills
- helping children expand their knowledge and increase their vocabulary
- opportunities to learn beginning skills involving the alphabet, numbers, and spatial awareness (Encyclopedia of Children's health, 2017 : 1)

Mere material selection for young children of preschool is not enough; rather the teachers or curriculum-body needs to go through a continuous supervision process. Whether reading material is

appropriate or not is actually examined through the experience of its use in the classroom. In this regard, Mcdough and Shaw (2003 : 72) say, "...materials evaluation is one part of a complex process and that materials once selected can only be judged successful after classroom implementation and feedback." In Infant Toddlers Material Guide, there is also significant discussion in this regard :

Purchasing the correct material is not sufficient; supervision and interaction with interested adults is necessary for children to make full use of them. Through intentional teaching, materials can be used for both child-guided experiences and adult-guided experiences. Materials need to be: interesting to children, sturdy, age appropriate, offer variety and choice and be arranged in such a way as to encourage independence and creativity. (Knopf and Schnake, 2015 : 1)

The materials and activities should be adapted to the learning situation of preschools and the teachers are to play an important role here (Pre-School Teaching and Learning Standard 2014 : 6). Since the needs of the preschool learners are various, many learners require extensive support and special care from the teachers to 'sustain their educational progress' (*ibid*).

Different child-friendly activities for young learners learning in the preschools are applied by the preschool teachers. Mainly focusing on children's aptitude for playing the activities are usually organized around the learning materials. This important issue is represented in Early Literacy (2017) as :

Play is a natural and very important part of a young child's world. Through play, children engage in representational and symbolic thoughts and actions. For example, a cylindrical block from the block area becomes a microphone for dramatic play and small cubes in a pot on the stove in the housekeeping area become a meal. Using one object or symbol to represent another is necessary for learning to read and write, because words that are used to read and write are symbols or representations of thoughts and objects. Children should have opportunities to read and write while they play. By using books, various writing media such as pencils, markers, crayons, and paints and brushes, children will extend their knowledge of the reading and writing process. (Early Literacy, 2017 : 3)

The cultural background of the young learners also need to be addressed for maintaining connection to the learning materials,

process and activities of the schools (Early Literacy, 2017: 6). The teachers, parents and caregivers should work in league to develop and select the appropriate reading materials for the young learners (*ibid*). There should be congruity between the learning activities at home and in the class room (*ibid*). The following suggestions are valuable in this respect :

1. Discuss with parents about books that children enjoy.
2. Provide feedback to parents on how children are using reading and writing by showing and discussing writing and reading in the context of art, housekeeping and so on.
3. Share written recipes that children have used for a cooking project and encourage parents to use these recipes at home.
4. Use favorite recipes in the classroom that children have brought in from home.
5. Encourage parents, older siblings or other relatives to the read stories to groups of children in the classroom.
6. Use parents who speak other languages to read books in their own language to groups of children.
7. Establish a classroom lending library so that children can take their favorite books home to read with family members. Non-English books written in the primary language of children must be included.
8. Provide workshops on literacy development for parents.
9. Connect parents with programs to help them improve their own literacy.

(Early Literacy, 2017 : 6)

It is not that in printed material always the teachers will find everything appropriate for the use in the children's classes. The teachers of pre-school need to take special care in this regard and their innovative ideas to accommodate with the teaching materials and modify the material as an appropriate one to be used for the children can play an effective role here. Giving emphasis on the matter of adaption, Madsen and Bowen wisely remark :

The good teacher is constantly adapting. He adapts when he adds an example not found in the book or when he telescopes an assignment by having students prepare 'only the even-numbered items'. He adapts even when he refers to an exercise covered earlier, or when he introduces a supplementary picture. While a conscientious author tries to anticipate questions that may be raised by his readers, the teacher can respond not merely to verbal questions...but even to the raised eyebrows of his students. (Madsen and Bowen, 1978 : vii)

*Print or Visual Aid as Materials:* Grellet (1981 : 8) asserts that reading material with illustration encourages learners to use the 'power of inference through systematic practice' In other words, reading material can help the learners to think and contextualize the learning experience with real life situation.

Involvement of the learners in the reading activities and active use of the material is a very important issue. The more the learners will be able to involve themselves using the material in the learning process, the better learning will take place. In this regard, NAEYC (1998 : 42 in Early Literacy, 2017 : 4) mentions, "Use teaching strategies and experiences that develop an awareness of differences in spoken words, syllables and sounds, such as songs, finger-plays, games, poems and stories in which phonemic patterns such as rhyme and alliteration are prominent."

Children almost from their birth become familiar with printed material especially in the literate environment in the family by the parents or caregivers (Early Literacy, 2017 : 1). As a result, they begin to construct meaning by seeing or observing the image or symbol in the print material and this very aptitude of the children is considered by the educators as a sign of 'emergent literacy' (*ibid*). As reading materials, the importance of printed materials in the early part of the learning is great. Giving emphasis on the importance of the print material, Early Literacy (2017 : 2) mentions:

Because we live in a print-rich society, young children are able to read environmental signs, such as labels on cereal boxes, names of restaurants and logos on clothing. In addition, young children who have been read to, who have had opportunities to "read" their own stories, who regularly see others reading and writing and who tend to experiment with writing, begin to understand that print has meaning. Many children, therefore, enter preschool programs with extensive exposure to reading and writing

as a functional process... The processes of reading and writing, together with speaking, develop simultaneously and are interdependent. For example, positive oral language experiences contribute to preschoolers' developing abilities to read and write. On the other hand, reading experiences influence oral language development as witnessed when children who encounter new words in print add these to their speaking vocabularies...

### *Some Important Terminologies and Cultural Concept*

'Adoption' is a process followed in textbook or material selection for any teaching-learning situation. In other words, this term refers to approval and selection of learning materials for teaching-learning pedagogy (McDonough and Show, 2003 : 72). This process of adoption is preceded by external and internal evaluation of learning materials (McDonough and Shaw, 2003). On the other hand, 'adaption' is the consequential process used after the selection and approval of teaching materials. Following this process, the teachers adjust the textbook for teaching-learning situation and thereby make the materials or texts appropriate (McDonough and Shaw, 2003 : 73). Cultural consistency is the requirement of good language learning materials for activation of learners' schemata taking the advantage of background knowledge (Grellet, 1981 : 14). If language learning materials possess cultural consistency, learners get benefit from the learning situation. The idea of 'tangibility' is also an important aspect for the content of young children's language materials According to Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2005 : 1327), something that is tangible means real thing or aspect and not imaginary one and this thing can be 'shown, touched, or experienced'.

### **Research Methodology**

#### *Research Design*

This is a qualitative research. Hence, both at the data collection and analysis levels qualitative approach has been followed.

#### *Data Collection Procedure*

Data have been collected through Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and document (content of text) analysis and in the data analysis level both content and narrative analyses have been followed.

*Instrument*

Observation checklist and FGD agenda have been used as instrument. To avoid subjectivity, the checklist has been prepared on the basis of teachers' feedback in the FGD session and definition of different terms (literature review). Findings from the teachers elicit ideas like, tangibility, everyday use, consistency with culture and clarity in illustration and the researcher has set these four basic criteria in the checklist to measure the suitability of the language learning textbooks prescribed for the pre-school learners in the selected five schools. Bangla Academy Bengali-English Dictionary (2011) has been used to get the English form of different Bangla words in the tables.

*Participants*

Convenient Sampling technique has been used in 5 pre-schools selection in Dhaka city and purposive sampling technique has been followed in the selection of pre-school teachers from these 5 schools.

**Findings and Data analysis**

All the examples are analyzed against these 4 criteria and tabulated in the following 11 tables:

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**Table: 1**

No. of sample	Examples Taken for analysis	Tangible		Consistency with culture		Frequently used in the everyday life		Illustration is understandable	
		Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
1	Bee (অলি)	√		√			√	√	
	'oju' (অয়ু)	√		√		√			√
	Horse (অশ্ব)	√			√		√	√	
2	Idle (অলস)		√	√		√			√
	Bee (অলি)	√		√			√	√	
3	Bee (অলি)	√		√			√	√	
4	Bee (অলি)	√		√			√	√	
5	Python (অজগর)	√		√			√	√	

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**Table: 2**

No. of sample	Examples Taken for analysis	Tangible		Consistency with culture		Frequently used in the everyday life		Illustration is understandable	
		Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
1	mango (আম)	√		√		√		√	
	wheat (আটা)	√		√		√		√	
	apple (আপেল)	√		√		√		√	
2	"azan' (আযান)	√		√		√			√
	mango (আম)	√		√		√		√	
3	mango (আম)	√		√		√		√	
4	mango (আম)	√		√		√		√	
5	mango (আম)	√		√		√		√	

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**Table: 3**

No. of sample	Examples Taken for analysis	Tangible		Consistency with culture		Frequently used in the everyday life		Illustration is understandable	
		Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
1	hilsha (ইলিশ)	√		√		√		√	
	brick (ইট)	√		√		√		√	
	rat (ইঁদুর)	√		√		√		√	
2	hilsha (ইলিশ)	√		√		√		√	
	rat (ইঁদুর)	√		√		√		√	
3	rat (ইঁদুর)	√		√		√		√	
4	rat (ইঁদুর)	√		√		√		√	
5	rat (ইঁদুর)	√		√		√		√	

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**Table: 4**

No. of sample	Examples Taken for analysis	Tangible		Consistency with culture		Frequently used in the everyday life		Illustration is understandable	
		Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
1	'eid' (ঈদ)	√		√		√			√
	'eman' (ঈমান)		√	√		√			√
	eagle (ঈগল)	√		√			√	√	
2	Eagle (ঈগল)	√		√			√	√	
	'eid' (ঈদ)	√		√		√			√
3	Eagle (ঈগল)	√		√			√	√	
4	Eagle (ঈগল)	√		√			√	√	
5	South-East (ঈশান, দক্ষিণ-পূর্ব)		√		√		√		√

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Table: 4

No. of sample	Examples Taken for analysis	Tangible		Consistency with culture		Frequently used in the everyday life		Illustration is understandable	
		Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
1	'eid' (ঈদ)	√		√		√			√
	'eman' (ঈমান)		√	√		√			√
2	eagle (ঈগল)	√		√			√	√	
	Eagle (ঈগল)	√		√			√	√	
3	'eid' (ঈদ)	√		√		√			√
	Eagle (ঈগল)	√		√			√	√	
4	Eagle (ঈগল)	√		√			√	√	
	South-East (ঈশান, দক্ষিণ-পূর্ব)		√		√		√		√

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Table: 5

No. of sample	Examples Taken for analysis	Tangible		Consistency with culture		Frequently used in the everyday life		Illustration is understandable	
		Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
1	Camel (উট)	√		√			√	√	
	airplane (উড়োজাহাজ)	√		√			√	√	
	advocate (উকিল)	√		√			√		√
2	camel (উট)	√			√		√	√	
	advocate (উকিল)	√		√			√	√	
3	camel (উট)	√			√		√	√	
4	Camel (উট)	√			√		√	√	
5	camel (উট)	√			√		√	√	

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Table: 6

No. of sample	Examples Taken for analysis	Tangible		Consistency with culture		Frequently used in the everyday life		Illustration is understandable	
		Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
1	Dawn (উষা)		√	√			√		√
	Wave (উর্ষা)	√		√			√		√
2	Thigh (উর্ধ্ব)	√		√			√		√
	Dawn (উষা)		√	√			√		√
3	baboon (বেবুন, উর্ধ্বক)	√			√		√	√	
	Dawn (উষা)		√	√			√		√
4	Dawn (উষা)		√	√			√		√
5	Thigh (উর্ধ্ব)	√		√			√		√

ঋ (/ri/) (Transliteration)

Table: 7

No. of sample	Examples Taken for analysis	Tangible		Consistency with culture		Frequently used in the everyday life		Illustration is understandable	
		Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
1	debt (ঋণ)		√	√			√		√
	season (ঋতু)	√		√			√		√
	hermit (ঋষি)	√		√			√	√	
2	debt (ঋণ)		√	√			√		√
	season (ঋতু)		√	√			√		√
3	season (ঋতু)		√	√			√		√
4	season (ঋতু)		√	√			√		√
5	hermit (ঋষি)	√		√			√	√	

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Table: 8

No. of sample	Examples Taken for analysis	Tangible		Consistency with culture		Frequently used in the everyday life		Illustration is understandable	
		Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
1	prayer (এবাদত)	√		√		√			√
	one (এক)	√		√		√			√
	unity (একতা)		√	√		√			√
2	Airplane (এরোপ্লেন)	√		√			√	√	
	unity (একতা)		√	√		√			√
3	Horse carriage (একগাড়ি)	√			√		√	√	
4	'ektara' (একতারা)	√		√			√	√	
5	Cardamon (এলাচি)	√		√		√		√	

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Table: 9

No. of sample	Examples Taken for analysis	Tangible		Consistency with culture		Frequently used in the everyday life		Illustration is understandable	
		Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
1	Eelephant (ঐরাবত)	√		√			√	√	
	Spiritual (ঐশি)		√	√			√		√
	unity(ঐক্য)		√	√		√			√
2	Elephant (ঐরাবত)	√		√			√	√	
	unity (ঐক্য)		√	√		√			√
3	Elephant (ঐরাবত)	√		√			√	√	
4	Elephant (ঐরাবত)	√		√			√	√	
5	Elephant (ঐরাবত)	√		√			√	√	

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Table: 10

No. of sample	Examples Taken for analysis	Tangible		Consistency with culture		Frequently used in the everyday life		Illustration is understandable	
		Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
1	'ol' (ওল)	√		√		√		√	
	Snake charmer (ওবা)	√		√			√	√	
	Weight (ওজন)	√		√			√		√
2	Teacher (ওস্তাদ)	√		√		√			√
	arum (ওল)	√		√		√		√	
3	arum (ওল)	√		√		√		√	
4	arum (ওল)	√		√		√		√	
5	arum (ওল)	√		√		√		√	

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Table: 10

No. of sample	Examples Taken for analysis	Tangible		Consistency with culture		Frequently used in the everyday life		Illustration is understandable	
		Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
1	medicine (ঔষধ)	√		√		√		√	
	Herbal (ঔষধি)	√		√			√		√
	pharmacy (ঔষধালয়)	√		√			√	√	
2	medicine (ঔষধ)	√		√		√		√	
	novelist (ঔপন্যাসিক)	√		√			√		√
3	medicine (ঔষধ)	√		√		√		√	
4	medicine (ঔষধ)	√		√		√		√	
5	medicine (ঔষধ)	√		√		√		√	



*Discussion on Findings from the Vowel Chart*

The tables represent the words starting with Bangla vowel sounds given as examples in the selected five text books. In table 1, the words starting with “অ” have been shown. As the examples have been taken from 5 different books it has been found that four books contain the word “অলি (bee). This word meets up 3 criteria- tangibility, consistency with culture, clarity in illustration but this word is not frequently used in everyday life. Another example word is অযু (aju-a process of cleanliness before performing prayer for Muslims) which also meets up the above 3 criteria except one that is the illustration which is not understandable to the learners. Then the next word of the same table is অশ্ব (horse), which meets up only two criteria, tangibility and clarity in the illustration but this word is not frequently used in everyday life and not culturally consistent. Another word is অলস (idle) and this word is not tangible and illustration is not clear, and finally the word অজগর (python) is not frequently used in everyday life but this one meets other 3 criteria.

In table 2, the example words with the letter “আ” are আম (mango), আটা (wheat), আপেল (apple) all these words meet up all the four criteria (tangibility, consistency with culture, clarity in illustration and frequency in use in everyday life). The only word of this table which meets 3 criteria (tangibility, consistency with culture, frequency in use in everyday life) but no clarity in the illustration is ‘(আযান)’ (the Islamic call to prayer).

In table 3, the example words with the letter “ই” are ইলিশ (hilsha), ইট (brick), ইঁদুর (rat). All these words meet up the four criteria set up by the researcher.

In table 4, the example words initiate with the letter “ঈ” and one of them is “ঈদ” (Eid) which meets up three criteria, but its illustration lacks clarity; the other word “ঈমান” (faith) is not tangible and its illustration is not understandable but it is culturally consistent and frequently used in our life. The other word of the same table is CMj (Eagle) which is tangible, culturally consistent and its illustration is clear but not frequently used in everyday life. And finally, the word is “ঈশান” (দক্ষিণ-পূর্ব / south-eastern) does not meet any of the criteria.

In table 5, the example words begin with letter “উ” and one of them is “উট” (camel) which is tangible and illustration is correct, but the animal

“উট” (camel) does not go with our culture for example, cow, goat etc. are culturally familiar) and not frequently used in our everyday life. The other word “উড়োজাহাজ” (airplane) is tangible, culturally consistent but frequency of this word in everyday life is comparatively less than the other synonym “plane” and in many cases the “plane” is used instead of “উড়োজাহাজ” and however, its illustration is understandable. Another example word is “উকিল” (advocate), which is tangible, consistent with culture and a part of everyday used word but illustration is not very clear.

In table 6, the first example word with the letter “উ” is “উষা” (dawn) and it is not tangible, neither frequently used in everyday life and its illustration is vague but the word “ভোর” (dawn) is culturally consistent and frequently used. The other word, “উর্মি” (wave) is tangible and culturally consistent but not frequently used in our everyday life and its illustration lacks clarity. Then the word, “উরু” (thai) is tangible and culturally consistent but not frequently used, and its illustration is not clear. The last word of this table is “উল্লুক /বেবুন” (baboon). This word is tangible but not culturally consistent, neither frequently used in everyday life. But, its illustration is clear. However, sometimes the young learners run into confusion with the illustration of baboon with monkey.

In table 7, the first example word with the letter “ঋ” is “ঋণ” (debt) and it is culturally consistent but not tangible and not frequently used in everyday life. The illustration that the sample books have used for this word is not clear. The next word is “ঋতু” (season) and its meaning is tangible (can be experienced), consistent with the culture but not frequently used in everyday life and its illustration is not clearly understandable. The other word is “ঋষি” (“দরবেশ”- hermit). This word is tangible and consistent with culture and its illustration is clear but the word “ঋষি” is not frequently used in our everyday life.

In table 8, first example word with the letter “এ” is “এবাদত” (prayer). This word is tangible (can be experienced), consistent with culture and frequently used in everyday life but its illustration is confusing. The word “এক” (one) is tangible, consistent and frequently used but with a confounding illustration. The next word is “একতা” (unity) and it is not tangible and its illustration is not clear, but this word is culturally consistent and frequently used in everyday life. The word, “এরোপ্লেন” (airplane) meets up all the criteria set. After that the word, “এক্সাগাড়ি” (Horse carriage) and it is tangible and its illustration is clear but this is

not culturally consistent. The last word is “একতারা” (ektara-a sort of musical instrument) and this is tangible, culturally consistent and its illustration is clear but this is obsolete in everyday life.

In table 9, first example word with the letter “এ” is “এরাবত” (elephant). This word is tangible, consistent with our culture and its illustration is clear but the word is not a part of our everyday life; rather the synonym of “এরাবত”, (Elephant/হাতি) is frequently used. The next word is “এশি” (divine) and it is not tangible, neither frequently used in everyday life and its illustration is not clear but this word is culturally consistent. The next word of this table is “এক” (unity) which is intangible and its illustration is not clear. But this is culturally consistent and in many cases we use this word in our everyday life.

In table 10, the first example word with the letter “ও” is “ওল” (edible bulbous plant). This word is tangible and consistent with our culture and many people use it in their everyday life. Its illustration is understandable. The next word in the table is “ওষা” (snake charmer). This word is tangible, culturally consistent and its illustration is clear but not frequently used in everyday life. The next word “ওজন” (weight) is tangible (can be experienced), culturally consistent and everyday-used word but its illustration is not clear. The next word in the table is “ওস্তাদ” (teacher). Here, the word is tangible and culturally consistent but in everyday life the synonym of “ওস্তাদ” (Teacher, শিক্ষক) is frequently used and the use of the word “ওস্তাদ” is confined in few context. The illustration of the example “ওস্তাদ” is not conspicuous or understandable.

In table 11, the first example word with the letter “ঔ” is “ঔষধ” (medicine) and it is tangible, consistent with culture, frequently used in everyday life, and finally its illustration is clear. Then the word, “ঔষধি” (medicinal plant) is tangible, consistent with our culture but not frequently used in everyday life, and its illustration is not clear. The next word in the table is “ঔষধালয়” (pharmacy) and this word is tangible, consistent with our culture but in everyday life the English word pharmacy (ফার্মেসি) is used frequently instead of “ঔষধালয়”. The illustration in the books for the word “ঔষধালয়” is clear and understandable. The next word in the table is “ঔপন্যাসিক” (novelist) and this is tangible and culturally consistent. This word “ঔপন্যাসিক” is used in a very limited context and the illustration is not clear.

Examples which do not match with the four criteria namely tangibility, consistency with the culture, frequency in everyday use, clarity in illustration are really problematic for the young learners. Learning of this stage should be such as will motivate and make the way of further learning smooth. Even sometimes problems become much more complicated when the examples match all the four sets of criteria but that does not match with learners’ here-and-now situation. For example, the words, “ঈমান” and “ঐক্য” are not so easy for the young learners to grasp the meaning. At the same time, it becomes difficult for the teachers to make the learners understand the meaning.

#### ***Findings from FGD session with the preschool teachers***

1. Teachers using printed language learning materials most of the time
2. In few cases, teachers preparing materials
3. Materials being always selected by the school authorities, principals, principals along with advisors and sometimes by board-members
4. Teachers directly not having any authority for selection, adoption and adaption of materials
5. Sometimes senior teachers giving suggestions for selection of materials
6. Teachers not being allowed to use additional materials.
7. Teachers drawing the notice of the concerned body in case of the discovery of any sort of anomaly in the texts.
8. With clear image text, drawing on the board or through oral description the teachers trying to solve problem of vague illustration
9. Bengali language learning materials having inconsistency in the use of different words which children do not experience in day to day life.
10. If cultural incongruity discovered in the language learning materials then the teachers giving evidence relevant to the culture of the learners
11. All the teachers coming to a consensus that available language learning materials not to be always appropriate or suitable for the preschool learners

12. Taking immediate measure to solve the problem related to learning material becoming urgent
13. Taking suggestion from parents, teachers as well as from the experts being important in adoption and adaption and creating material appropriate for the learners

#### *Discussion on the Findings from the FGD Session with Teachers*

So, preschool teachers here hardly enjoy the authority for selection, adoption and adaption of teaching materials. But, it is the teachers who only face the dynamic teaching-learning situation in implementing the selected materials. On the other hand, teachers are not allowed to use any extra or additional materials. It is a very fixed situation for the teachers as they can sort out the problem with the materials but enjoy no freedom to solve it. But, even in this sort of fixed situation, they try to make the learners accommodate with the selected text by using clear image or through their own drawing and other relevant techniques. It is very interesting that the persons who are directly involved in the teaching-learning situation, are not allowed to counsel in the selection procedure. Moreover, the available printed language learning materials are not fully appropriate for the learners. Since the illustration of the texts is not clear and at the same time, some words do not match with children's experience with everyday life, the teachers face problems in making the young learners understand the meaning of those words. Hence, it is very important either to customize the existing selected materials or to create appropriate materials by the experts, of course, taking suggestions from different stakeholders (teachers, parents, educational policy makers).

#### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

From the findings and discussion it becomes clear that the Bengali language learning materials have problems and therefore, are not appropriate for the young learners. Here, teachers also do not enjoy privilege to adopt appropriate materials and so, they adapt the texts to accommodate with the teaching-learning situation. However, until and unless these sorts of problems are solved, the teachers have no other option but to follow a book which might not be much appropriate for the effective development of L1 of the learners. In such a circumstance the teacher should think over the terms 'adopting' and 'adapting' and a good

teacher must always be ready to adapt in times of need for the better learning of the learners. Most importantly the government should form a central body for the setting of curriculum, designing of syllabus, selection of learning materials and so on for the uniformity in all the preschools. At the same time, there should be continual evaluation of the materials implemented in the pre-school programme. On the other hand, teachers should go under Continuous Professional Development (CPD) (Abedin, 2010). It is the teachers who as a matter of fact, put the materials into practice in the teaching-learning situation. Experts, parents, children, teachers and the school authority- all should work in a league to select the appropriate materials for the preschool students.

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