

English Literature in English Medium Schools in Bangladesh: The Question of Post-colonial¹ Pedagogy

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Abstract

English literature has been part of the syllabus of English-medium schools from the early days of the British colonial encroachment in the South Asian region. In today's Bangladesh from the late seventies, the O/A level or equivalent "international" systems started spreading, instead of the "national curriculum in English-medium" of the Pakistani era. The proliferation of English-medium schools after 1990, concurrent with the wholesale adoption of free market policies, the return of democracy in 1990, and globalisation, has meant that an ever-increasing number of Bangladeshi children and young adults are studying English literature as a compulsory subject until standard eight, or as an optional subject after that. However, they are doing this in an inchoate way, some if not many of them imbibing the inherent culture, values and worldviews of these texts. The students remain comparatively unaware of other non-western literatures, including to some extent, Bengali literature, due to the primacy of English language, literature and culture in these institutions. Thus, there is a need for a post-colonial pedagogic system for English literature at these institutions in order to offset the effects of neo-colonialism. This study tries to analyse the present teaching and learning practices, argues for a post-colonial pedagogy and suggests ways of formulating a revised pedagogy for teaching English literature at these schools.

Abstract in Malay

Kesusasteraan Inggeris telah menjadi sebahagian daripada sukatan pelajaran sekolah-sekolah aliran Inggeris sejak awal penjajahan British di rantau Asia Selatan. Bangladesh yang pada hari ini berada di era pasca-kolonialismenya, telah dari mula menjadikan kesusasteraan Inggeris sebagai komponen penting dalam sukatan pelajaran di sekolah-

¹ We use post-colonial to mean post-independence or anticipating the end of colonialism in all its forms and postcolonial to mean all the political, cultural, discursive practices connected with the colonial contact. Neo-colonial is a term which we use to be more specific about the post-colonial reality or the reality of the late colonial era.

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sekolah aliran Inggeris. Sekitar lewat 70-an, pengajian O/A level atau sistem setaraf “antarabangsa” telah berkembang, bukan kurikulum kebangsaan dari era pemerintahan Pakistan. Perkembangan meluas sekolah-sekolah aliran Inggeris selepas tahun 1990, selari dengan dasar pasaran bebas, kembalinya demokrasi pada tahun 1990 serta globalisasi, menyebabkan peningkatan berterusan bilangan kanak-kanak dan remaja Bangladesh yang mempelajari Kesusasteraan Inggeris sebagai matapelajaran wajib sehingga tahap lapan, dan sebagai matapelajaran pilihan selepas itu. Walaubagaimanapun, sebahagian mereka belajar dengan kaedah yang masih belum lengkap, di mana kalau tidak pun ramai, sejumlah kecil dari mereka mempejari secara semulajadi unsur-unsur budaya, nilai-nilai murni, dan pandangan sejagat dari teks-teks yang digunakan. Para pelajar secara asasnya tidak menyedari tentang kesusasteraan bukan barat apatah lagi kesusasteraan Bengal akibat daripada keutamaan yang diberikan terhadap bahasa, kesusasteraan dan kebudayaan Inggeris di institusi berkenaan. Oleh itu, kaedah pedagogi pasca-kolonialisme dalam pengajaran kesusasteraan Inggeris di institusi tersebut adalah perlu untuk menyeimbangkan kesan-kesan dari neo-kolonialisme. Kajian ini cuba menganalisa amalan pengajaran dan pembelajaran terkini dan menyarankan penggunaan pedagogi pasca-kolonialisme serta mencadangkan cara-cara membentuk pedagogi dalam pengajaran kesusasteraan Inggeris di sekolah-sekolah tersebut.

Keywords

English-medium schools, colonial, post-colonial, post-colonial pedagogy, neo-colonialism, globalisation

Keywords in Malay

Sekolah aliran Inggeris, kolonial, pasca-kolonial, pedagogi pasca-kolonial, neo-kolonialisme, globalisasi

Introduction

English literature has been an integral part of the Bangladeshi English-medium schools’ (first missionary, then “secular”) curriculum from the earliest days of the introduction of western education in 19th century, till today. Although these schools have long catered to the needs of the wealthier classes, there has been a significant increase in both the number of schools and their students since the 1990s, following the wholesale adoption of free market economic policies, the spread of globalisation, and the emergence of a unipolar world. These students are exposed, in their school years, to literary works written in English, inculcating many a times values quite different to the ones adhered to by most of the people in Bangladesh, at their most impressionable age. These literary works and excerpts (from different literary pieces) in English language and literature books are taught for the purpose of teaching and improving the students’ English language ability, or implicitly for making the students “cultured” via the exposure to English literature, without paying adequate

attention to the literary and cultural nuances inherent in them. The colonial heritage and the neo-colonial power equations – which according to Kwame Nkrumah as reported by Adejumo, “are much more subtle and varied [than the colonial power structures or the neo-colonial power-“western” knowledge nexus], operating not only in the economic realm but also in that of politics, religion, ideology, and culture” (328) – are perhaps not kept in mind while teaching these apparently innocuous literary texts to children and young adults. Some of these children and young adults, according to many educated or not-so-educated common Bangladeshi parents are becoming, or may become, permanently alienated from their own vernacular literature and culture, in this case Bengali/Bangladeshi.³ Some of them might also become myopic regarding other non-western literatures, some of which are historically rather more relevant for Bengali/Bangladeshi students than English literature. Thus, there is a need for a post-colonial pedagogy for English literary studies in English-medium schools in Bangladesh, not only to offset the effects of colonialism and neo-colonialism, to a certain extent, but also to ensure a more in-depth study of English literature, which might result in more students from these institutions taking up English Literature at O- or A-Level (or equivalent) and even getting admitted to the English departments of public and private universities of the country in substantial numbers, contrary to the present depressing scenario.

The Colonial Background of English Literary Studies in English-medium Schools in South Asia/Bangladesh

At the inception of English/western education in British-administered South Asia in 1835, Macaulay infamously wrote of the target of this education in his “Minute on Indian Education,” thus: “We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions we govern; *a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect*” (*The Post-colonial Studies Reader* 430; italics added). These people were to, he added, “constitute a class who would in fact protect British interests and help them rule a vast and potentially unruly land” (Loomba 85).

Gauri Viswanathan, in her exploration of English literary study in the British-controlled South Asia, makes very clear how it became “a mask for economic and material exploitation, and were an effective form of political control”: “Certain humanistic functions traditionally associated with literature – for example, *the shaping of character or the development of the aesthetic sense or the*

³ We use Bengali and Bangladeshi to encapsulate the debate regarding national identity between Bengali and Bangladeshi nationalists who have been ruling Bangladesh alternately from the return of democracy in 1990. We do not believe in taking an either/or position and believe this debate to be quite useless as both the groups tend to ignore the much more important question of economic/class disparity. Both kinds of nationalists are also oblivious of the neo-colonial hegemony which as putative patriots they should have resisted.

disciplines of ethical thinking – were considered essential to the processes of sociopolitical control by the guardians of the same tradition” (Loomba 86; italics added).

The British rulers introduced English literature at a strategic moment. By the 1820’s they had “made English literature central to the curriculum of British schools [English-medium schools] in India at a time when the classical curriculum still held sway in England itself” (Booker 152). Ashcroft and his co-editors, referring to Viswanathan, suggest: “As Gauri Viswanathan points out, the concept of *universalism* became part of the technology of Empire: when the introduction of Christianity was considered by the Indian colonial administration to be *too great a threat to good order*, the ‘universal’ discourse of English literature was consciously adopted as the vehicle for *educating* the Indian elites in tenets of civilized morality” (56; italics added). Thus, English literature was conceived of as an effective tool for civilising/pacifying/liberalising the natives and “The English text was positioned as *a repository of abstract and universal values* to be accepted as such.... Such was this dissociation of literary education from its colonialist and ideological bases that it retained *an unquestioned and unproblematic position* long after the end of British rule” (Sharma 176; italics added). The colonialist bias behind English literary education is perhaps most pointedly exemplified by the “notorious but not unique” belief of Macaulay that “a single shelf of European literature was worth all the books of India and Arabia” (Loomba 86).

Philip G. Altbach comments that the indigenous system of education, which included the study of Persian, Arabic or Sanskrit among other things, was destroyed “either by design or as the inadvertent result of policies which ignored local needs and traditions” (452). By the 1880s all over British India, “the core of the college and high school curriculum consisted of European literature [with English literature being centrally placed] and science” (Sharma 184). Thus, in the schools and colleges, specifically English-medium/missionary schools, English literature continued to be of much importance during the British Raj.

In 1947, the British decolonised the Indian subcontinent, leaving behind the two independent “post-colonial” nation-states of India and Pakistan, where East Bengal became East Pakistan. In 1971, East Pakistan became Bangladesh, after a war of liberation. Professor Niaz Zaman, in her entry on English in the *Banglapedia* (CD version), encapsulates the fate of English/English-medium schools during the Pakistani period (1947-1971) and in independent Bangladesh as follows:

At the time of partition in 1947, education at the primary and secondary levels was in the vernacular, with the exception of *a couple of missionary schools that offered instruction in English.... In 1972, Bangla became the official language of*

Bangladesh... Bangla became the medium of instruction in all schools and colleges. At the universities, apart from the English departments, students had the option of answering examinations in either Bangla or English. The wholesale change, however, saw almost simultaneously the growth of what were initially small, informal, private endeavours to preserve English language education at the school level. A number of English-medium kindergartens and tutorials started offering alternative English language education and prepared students for British O' and A' levels. Till the 80s these tutorials were on a minor key. From the early 90s, however, these tutorials proliferated into 'international schools.' The late 90s saw the establishment of a number of full-fledged international schools run as commercial ventures and often headed by foreign nationals. (Italics added)

Of the current systems of education prevalent in Bangladesh, the English-medium (excluding the National Curriculum in English version), caters most to the needs of the very to moderately rich sections of society and has the strongest connection with the Anglo-US/US-European alliance. Not only is English the medium of instruction for all subjects other than the vernacular Bengali, but English literature is a compulsory subject from the lower classes up to Standard Eight. Batool Sarwar, a product of the English-medium schools in Bangladesh and a teacher at the English Department of the University of Dhaka, in her article, titled "The Spread of English: Causes and Implications" succinctly comments on the proliferation of English-medium schools and its class and power aspects:

In Bangladesh, for example, the ability to speak English has become the exclusive property of a *microscopic section* of society who can afford to send their children to *private English-medium schools*. It is this small segment of society who *will dominate the job market in the future* and this in turn will enable them to *afford expensive private education for their children*. Thus, a *vicious circle* is created where English becomes the means of creating and maintaining a rigid hierarchical stratification of society. (32; italics added)

The spread of globalisation means that the English-medium schools with their "international" curriculum and examination system are going to be more and more connected with the neo-colonial network of world capitalism. Rizvi et al in their article entitled "Postcolonialism and Education: Negotiating a Contested Terrain," point out the connection between globalisation and imperialism: "contemporary globalization cannot be disassociated from its roots in European projects of imperialism. These projects continue to shape the lives of people, not only within the developing, but also the developed, world, within the framework of a global geometry of power that is inherently unequal" (225).

As these schools are situated within the western educational, literary and cultural domain, non-western literatures even in English translation are not included in the syllabi of this "International" system or not prescribed by many

schools. Though considered *ambiguous* by some, the category known as postcolonial literature in English is also quite absent and the vernacular Bengali literature is not emphasised as in the Bengali medium stream. The English literature teachers, we believe, fail to provide nuanced understanding of the literary texts and thus fail to take into account the overall colonial and neo-colonial context of teaching/studying English literature, which might have provided the students the chance to decolonise it in a commonsensical way. The need of the hour is to decolonise the pedagogy, keeping in mind the level of maturity and mental makeup of students and the educational infrastructure and transnational linkages of these schools.

Defining Post-colonial Pedagogy

By post-colonial pedagogy for English-medium schools, we mean the method of teaching English literature in such a way that the inscription of the English literary text in the colonial and neo-colonial network of power and knowledge becomes clear to the student, so that these texts do not contribute to producing “confused *deshis*” living in Bangladesh, rather than in a western country. We speak of a simultaneous and equivalent focus on the English literary text, the historical/political/artistic/economic/social/cultural/discursive context of its creation and the context of its reception in the colony, post-colony or neo-colony. All these should be done with an acute awareness of the materiality of the text and the ideology inherent in it. This pedagogy should not be disinterested at all, though it need not be enamoured of the different postcolonial theories, or blindly follow any rigorous theoretical or discursive approach. It can even be commonsensical and as such can be taught to students who are not adult or mature.

The Methodology of the Study

The study was conducted by two authors. The first author has taught at several premier English-medium schools, while the second author has had the experience of interacting in depth with students at the tertiary level coming from many renowned English-medium schools in Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh, which has the highest number of these schools. This secondary-source based theoretical article has been strengthened by triangulating with primary data gathered through observation, informal interviews and attitude questions using two questionnaires following what we understand to be the qualitative-quantitative approach. It analyses the neo-colonial pedagogic hegemony (used in the Gramscian sense of “domination by consent” [Ashcroft 425]), which works through English literature in English-medium schools. Conclusions are made based on the authors’ experiences, secondary theoretical sources, observational data and theories of neo-colonialism, culture and cultural imperialism. Two questionnaires were prepared for students and teachers and

piloted among ten students and four teachers of different English-medium schools in Dhaka. In designing the questionnaires, the economic and educational backgrounds of the teachers/students and issues of teaching/interpreting English literary texts, commonsensical ideas about meaning and literary analysis, as well as the sensitive nature of the whole enterprise, were kept in mind. Thus, no questions regarding politics or neo-colonialism were included, even in the teachers' questionnaire. Following the success of the pilot study in designing the questionnaires that were both easy for the students and appropriate for the teachers, it was then distributed among both groups in different English-medium schools in Dhaka. The questions put to the two groups (student and teacher) were either the same, or similar, allowing triangulation of the data with secondary theoretical materials. The results were collated, tabulated and then analysed using a broad neo-Marxist post-colonial theoretical framework⁴ and the basic theoretical argument of the article was substantiated in an interpretive manner.

The Survey

The survey was based on written answers to structured questionnaires designed for students and teachers. In constructing the questionnaires the authors tried to follow the basic principles of qualitative-quantitative survey; hence the use of ranking questions and preference organisation questions/tables, along with listing questions/tables. The sample size was also not very large [20%-30% of the total population of the English literature teachers and students of the institutions covered], considering among other things the tangential utility of the survey results.

The Questionnaires

In the teachers' questionnaire there were eleven questions, including a profile of each individual. The students' questionnaire had thirteen, also including a profile of each student (two of them only for O- and A-level students). The respondents chose their answers from multiple choices. However, options were provided for making more than one choice. Respondents could also write their own answers if those listed were either inadequate or not applicable, with the added option of abstention. The answers to attitude questions were collated in two kinds of tables: 1) Inclusion/Listing Table and 2) Preference Organisation Table, where students' and teachers' rankings of different answers to some of the questions were given.

⁴ The kind of postcolonial theories that we had in mind while writing our article is termed "resistance theories" or "liberation theories" by Benita Parry in the book, *Postcolonial Studies: A Materialist Critique* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004).

The Participants

The participants were 22 teachers, with experience of teaching in English-medium schools ranging from 4 to 22 years, and 94 students from O-/A-levels and pre-O-level, from 10 English-medium schools in Dhaka, some of which are the largest in Bangladesh. About 25%-30% of the schools' English teachers (of the branches included) were covered in the survey. The authors had to approach the teachers through acquaintances. About five percent of the students of these institutions or branches were put into the survey net. In total there were 116 respondents who filled in their respective questionnaires willingly.⁵ Due to time-constraints and the unwillingness or lack of cooperation from some schools, who among other things did not want their school or the English-medium system of schooling under scrutiny for monetary, political, ideological reasons, the number of participants could not be higher. Almost all the responding teachers had served more than one organisation in their career.

Table of Participants

Name of the Institutions	No. of Teachers	No. of students
European Standard School	2	10
Mastermind	2	24
Dhanmondi Tutorial	4	22
Sunnydale	2	10
Green Herald	2	0
Maple Leaf	6	2
Manarat International School	2	10
Oxford International School	2	8
Cephalon International School	0	6
Academia	0	2
Total: 10 Institutions	22	94

⁵ The sample size of our survey does not fit the criteria for a purely quantitative survey in which perhaps about 15%-20% of the teachers and students should have been covered across the country. We simply did not and still do not hope to have (even in the distant future) the logistical or infrastructural support for such an endeavour. We tried to touch almost all the major English medium schools of Dhaka, i.e. Bangladesh. These schools are trendsetters for the other ones. Although the number of participants, both teachers (who were mainly focused upon) and students (who were included to check what the teachers were doing practically/unconsciously in class) was small, we tried to analyse the pedagogical practices by including both listing and preference organisation type attitude questions. The authors communicated with a statistician at United International University and a professor of Sociology at the University of Dhaka, who agreed that for a survey which is qualitative-quantitative, the survey component was reliable.

The Survey Results⁶

The Teachers' Tables Analyses

Answers' Summary Table (based primarily on the preference organisation tables)

Question	Answer
1. Educational Qualification	Most (among those surveyed) teachers had Bangladeshi postgraduate degrees.
2. Educational Background (Higher Secondary Level)	Equal numbers of teachers came from Bengali and English-medium background.
3. Family's Economic Background	Most came from middle class, followed by an equal number from upper-middle and lower-middle class families.
4. Why have you chosen to teach English literature?	Most chose to teach English literature as they liked the subject.
5. Do you think it is enough to understand a literary text lexically?	Most wrote it was not really enough to understand a literary text lexically, although the majority did not say it emphatically.
6. If your answer is "No" then what are the things that you tell the students to do to achieve a thorough understanding of a literary text?	Most wrote one has to use the dictionaries of literary terms and understand the literary text stylistically.
7. How do you interpret a literary text most often?	Most teachers either considered the literary text as an interconnected whole or most often connected it with its context.
8. Which of the following ways do you use most in class to teach a literary text?	Most wrote paraphrasing.
9. Do you bring in instances from	Most wrote they did it sometimes.

⁶ Because of the qualitative-quantitative nature of the primary data collected through the teachers' and students' questionnaires, we do refer/allude to important numerical data throughout the part of our article dealing with the survey. However, the presentation/analyses of the data are more interpretive than descriptive/determinative. We consistently try to connect the findings with the theoretical core of our article, but the data is not supposed to show or prove *in the manner of science* that our position regarding the topic is the only valid one. Our aim is not to convince or convert people belonging to other/different/opposing pedagogic positions at one go. We believe we have a valid point, and are ready to read about other points of view, which might make the issues raised by us much clearer than it is today.

western history, popular culture (cinema, music, bestseller books etc.) to contextualise the literary texts that you teach?	
10. What kinds of texts do you like to read outside the ones you teach?	Most wrote English newspapers.
11. Do you have any text from the non-Western world written in English included in your syllabus?	Most wrote “No.”

The survey results are discussed below according to the order of the questions in the questionnaire, answered by 22 teachers affiliated with 8 English-medium schools in Bangladesh.

The result suggests⁷ that most of the teachers teaching English Literature in the English-medium schools did not have any foreign degree. This indicates that these teachers are probably knowingly or unknowingly transmitting their own teachers’ formalist/new critical/old Marxist/old historicist views about analysing literary texts, or were unaware of any theoretical approach in their pedagogy.

The data about educational background suggests, interestingly, that almost the same number of respondent teachers completed their higher secondary education from Bengali or English-medium institutions. It can be safely presumed that these teachers from two different backgrounds have two different interpretive, lexical, political, socio-cultural, and in short, pedagogic referents, with those coming from the English-medium background probably being more at ease or confident.

The third question was about the economic background of the teachers’ families. The fact that the highest number – more than half the respondents – of English Literature teachers of English-medium schools, came from the middle classes suggests that when they opted to study English Literature they probably had monetary gain as well as prestige in mind. The second highest number of teachers coming from the upper-middle class suggests that to these teachers, teaching English Literature was prestigious as well as financially attractive. Considering the comparatively recent emergence of a sizeable upper-middle class in Bangladesh, we can say that in terms of class and culture, these teachers are not very different from the majority. However, as students and then teachers of English Literature, they are perhaps less nationalistic or critical of US-European-controlled global capitalism than the other group. The same

⁷ We use “suggests” instead of “shows” in referring to the data from the survey, to indicate the interpretive nature of our conclusions in line with the qualitative-quantitative nature of the survey.

percentage coming from the lower-middle class, almost one fifth, indicates an attraction to the lucrative nature of the profession in the era of seemingly irresistible globalisation. These teachers belonging to the three different classes may have conflicting views regarding pedagogy, based on their relationship to the neo-colonial power structure and its local agents.

When asked about the reason why he/she had opted to teach English Literature, the majority's choice included "b. I feel I am helping improve the standard of English of the students." It suggests that the idea of learning/teaching language through literature is paramount among most teachers of English Literature at English-medium schools. The second highest number of respondents, evidently a good percentage, included "a. I like English literature," suggesting that teaching English literature is a popular profession. The option "c" included by the third highest number of students suggests that to some teachers, knowing English literature even in schools is tantamount to being cultured, which may well reveal a pro-western inflection. The preference organisation table suggests that the best reason for choosing to become a teacher of English literature was because of its vaguely conceptualised "appeal" (a) as a subject. It proves that most of those who consider other reasons for teaching English literature are inclined to express a vague liking for the literature, not unconnected with the colonial hangover. However, the small number of people who chose "interest in western culture" (e) suggests that most teachers do not think of neo-colonial western/global culture as either adversarial or hegemonic. They are thus unaware of the stranglehold of neo-colonialism⁸ and the nexus of global capital-western knowledge-western culture-English literature.

The fifth question was about whether the teachers thought that it was enough to understand a literary text lexically. The fact that all respondents ticked either the option "No" or "To a certain extent" suggests that most teachers believe that only deciphering the lexical, denotative and even perhaps connotative meaning of words in a literary text was not enough. They perhaps had in mind the socio-cultural/political/ historical contexts of the texts, the knowledge of which they considered important.

The sixth question asked the teachers who had answered "No" to the preceding question to elaborate on the best methods of understanding a literary text. The first option "a" (studying the text stylistically by using dictionaries of literary terms) was chosen by all respondents and ranked highest by the majority (half) of the respondents, suggesting preference for formalist approaches. All the respondents also included "c," about reading western notes, but only a few ranked it best. On the other hand, most respondents included "d" (reading

⁸ The primary inspiration for our understanding of the neo-colonial and neo-colonialism is Kwame Nkrumah's *Neo-Colonialism, the Last Stage of Imperialism*, available at <http://www.marxists.org/subject/africa/nkrumah/neo-colonialism>.

western criticism), but only a few ranked it best. Interestingly, more people included the option about western notes (c) than Indian notes (b). Those who included Indian notes did not place it among the ranking. It suggests that many English-medium teachers seemingly prefer western notes and criticisms to more widely available Indian ones. The fact that most of the respondents included the option “e” which implies the use of “English to Bengali dictionaries and paraphrases,” and that all respondents ticked more than one option imply that the teachers apparently suggest multiple ways for understanding literary texts. It also suggests that young students feel the need to have English literature translated to them lexically as well as culturally. Thus, even for many of these English-medium students, English is very much a foreign rather than second language, and English literature and culture are not very intellectually accessible.

The seventh question was about the method of literary analysis followed most often by the teachers. The majority included “c,” or contextualisation, which was also ranked best by the highest number. A good number included “b” or the use of new critical/formalist/old historicist/old Marxist methods, which was also ranked best by the same number of teacher-respondents. More than half of the respondents included “a,” about following the teachers, ranked best by the third highest number of teachers, which might mean using new critical/formalist/old historicist/old Marxist methods or following no specific method consciously. It suggests that most of the teachers surveyed are either eclectic or not very clear about the method they follow. They are unclear about the relationship between power, pedagogy and knowledge in the neo-colonial late capitalist/late colonialist world *disorder*, otherwise they would along with contextualisation have tried to connect it with the students’ context in a non-universalistic, post-colonial way, rather than be ambiguous in their methods of literary analysis.

In answer to the eighth question about the method most often used to teach literary texts in class, the inclusion of choice “a” or paraphrasing by most teachers surveyed, which was also ranked best by the highest number, suggests a bottom-up strategy being used in these English-medium schools. This is perhaps because the teachers considered it their duty to focus more on teaching language through literature. The inclusion of “c” or “d” implying contextualisation or cultural translation by the second highest number of respondents is quite interesting, which are ranked best by the second and third highest number of respondents, suggesting that the teachers surveyed are apparently aware of the need for making the texts contextually situated and its relevance clarified to the students. The fact that a huge number of teachers included “More than one” and the idiosyncratic answers of some teachers, however, suggest that most teachers surveyed are not particularly aware about the different specific methods of analysing and teaching literature, but the ranking table not including more than three ways, suggests they are reluctant to

acknowledge it. Interestingly enough, a few teachers had included “b” or “Translating the text into Bengali” but it does not get any position in the ranking table. It suggests that some teachers use Bengali for the students’ convenience, but do not consider it valid, nor are they prepared to acknowledge its use when pressed to give a more precise answer. This also indicates a level of alienation from Bengali, the mother tongue, as well as the low standard of English of many of the students, which might be because they come from families who climbed the class ladder very recently.

The answer to the ninth question about contextualising suggests that most respondent teachers only occasionally resorted to it, or referred to the English literary texts as “western.” The straight answer “Yes” of the rest leads us to the conclusion that the teachers surveyed are perhaps aware of the value of proper historical/cultural/political contextualisation in terms of western history/culture/popular culture. However, the limited number of straight “Yes” answers suggests they are unaware of the neo-colonial power-knowledge-literature-culture nexus.

The tenth question, about the kind of reading outside class purposes done by teachers, elicited the expected answers, with the majority of the teachers including English newspapers, novels and short stories (“a,” “b” and “d” respectively), and these were ranked best by the top three fractions of respondent/surveyed teachers. However, all the respondents included more than one option, and the inclusion of only four options (“English newspapers,” “English novels,” “English short stories” and “English plays,” “a,” “b,” “c” or “d,” respectively prioritised) in best ranking perhaps indicate that most teachers surveyed do not read much literature outside the texts they teach. The result also suggests that the teachers are not interested in serious sophisticated texts, like those of philosophy, social sciences, literary theory etc. The lack of interest in literary or other relevant theories which insist that “politics is pervasive” and not that literature should be/can be approached non-ideologically is, indeed, disheartening as these theories especially some of the post-colonial varieties have strong liberating potential.

The answers to the eleventh question about non-western English texts on the syllabus suggest there were no such texts in the vast majority of the schools surveyed. A few respondents opted for an unambiguous yes, suggesting that it was an unimportant part of the syllabus. The second highest chose the option, “a few,” which suggests that these teachers perhaps thought the number of such texts inadequate, or that these were treated as insignificant in terms of literary value.⁹ The answers suggest that in these schools, the arena of “foreign”

⁹ The absence of non-Western English literary texts on the syllabus of most of the schools surveyed (one school has one syllabus for all the branches, and many of the schools surveyed are trendsetters) does indicate that these literary texts were considered not like the texts produced by British or American writers. As the teachers do have a role to play in English medium schools in

literature means those in English, despite the freedom provided by the government and the international educational boards who manage the O/A or equivalent examinations regarding the syllabus at pre-O-level classes. This is perhaps an evidence of western neo-colonial pedagogic/cultural hegemony being perpetuated by the teachers, or rather, the owners of most of the English-medium schools surveyed.

The Students' Tables Analyses

94 students affiliated with 9 major English-medium schools in Bangladesh answered the students' questionnaire.

Answers' Summary Table (based primarily on the preference organisation tables)

Question	Answer
1. Family's Economic Background	Most came from the upper-middle class followed by the middle class.
2. Parents' Educational Qualification	Most had done Masters.
3. Do you think it is enough to understand a literary text lexically?	Most thought it was not enough, although they were not very clear about it.
4. If your answer is "No," then what things do you do mostly to achieve a thorough understanding of a literary text?	Most took recourse to the materials found on the internet or were eclectic.
5. In what ways do you interpret a literary text, when you write about it?	Most consider the literary text as an inter-connected whole or connect it most often with its context.
6. What kinds of help do you take most often to study a text, as it is explained or after it has been explained in class?	Most depended on class notes, followed by those who took the help of classmates, friends, or family members, or read reference works.
7. Why do you read English literary texts on your syllabus?	Most wrote that their family had a tradition of reading English books, followed by the need to do well in the examination.
8. What kinds of English writings do you like to read outside your syllabus?	Most wrote English novels, followed by English newspapers and English short stories.
9. Which of the following ways is used	Most wrote, connecting the literary

designing the pre-O-level English literature syllabus, it does reflect the opinion of the teachers surveyed if not all the English literature teachers of these schools in a way.

most often in your classes to teach a literary text?	text to its context, followed by “paraphrasing” and connecting it with “everyday life.”
10. Do your teachers bring in instances from western history, popular culture (cinema, music, bestseller books etc.) in class to contextualise the literary texts that you are taught?	Most replied in positive “yes” or “sometimes.”
11. Do you have any text from the non-western world written in English included in your syllabus?	Most wrote “No,” followed by some who wrote “A few,” implying insignificant numbers.
12. Question (For O-level students only) Would you take A-level English Literature?	The vast majority wrote “No.”
13. Would you take English Literature as the major at the university level?	Most wrote “Yes” followed by others in close numbers, who opted for “No” or did not answer the question.

As we can see from the answers about the economic class of the students, the majority of students surveyed came from either upper-middle or upper class family backgrounds. It means that most English-medium students belong to what is a microscopic privileged class, as referred to by Ms. Batool Sarwar in her article, supposedly having different opinions on many issues from the majority of the population of a developing/dependent nation-state like Bangladesh. A notable percentage being middle class, however, suggests that they are feeling the pull to send their children to these expensive schools, so that in the era of globalisation and free market economy, their offspring do not lag behind and learn English better than other Bengalis/Bangladeshis so that they do not remain distant from what we know to be the neo-colonial/late colonial/late capitalist world order and its tentacles in Bangladesh.

The answers to the second question about parents’ educational background suggest that almost all parents of English-medium students surveyed had higher education: that is, have Bachelor’s, Master’s, or PhD degrees. Therefore, these students are not sent nonchalantly to these expensive institutions. These educated parents of the upper or upper middle classes, seem to have the target of ensuring that their offspring reach a prestigious position in – what many an educated person in Bangladesh that we met, consider to be – a fast globalising/globalised world. The scenario becomes clearer if we correlate this table with the previous one about families’ economic background, which suggests that the postcolonial elite of Bangladesh are sending their children to these institutions apparently to link them with world capitalism from the earliest

age possible.

The majority of the respondents ticking either the option “No” or “Sometimes,” to the third question about whether it was enough to understand a literary text lexically, suggests that respondent students of English-medium schools, like the teachers surveyed, vaguely believe that the meaning of a literary text lies in understanding the written words as well as their context.

If the listing and preference tables for the fourth question are examined side by side, we reach the conclusion that the students seem to be sceptical about their own strategies for understanding literary texts. They have opted for many options (“a. Indian notes,” “b. Western notes,” “c. Western criticism,” “d. Internet”) in good numbers but were not sure of their importance and usefulness, as the small percentages of the preference table suggests. Somewhat exceptional is the option about using internet materials which is considered the best method by the vast majority of the respondent students. This indicates simultaneously the students’ lack of book-reading habit and their dependence on an inchoate and not necessarily reliable source like the Internet, especially the materials available for free. The students seem also to be unaware that much of this material is permeated by western/neo-colonial ideas, lifestyle and culture.

In answering the fifth question about analysing literary texts, the majority included the new critical/formalist option “b” of “treating the text as an interconnected whole,” that indicates a top-down attitude and also ranked it as the best. The second highest number of students included “c” or “contextualisation” and also mostly favoured the option. The third highest number of students included the choice “a” of following the teachers, which probably means following the new critical/old historicist/old Marxist/formalist methods, or not following any method consciously, though the preference table suggests it to be one of the least popular ones. This discrepancy between inclusion and preference tables about interpreting the texts suggests that many students of English-medium schools seem to be somewhat unclear about the methods of study when approaching literary texts, consciously or unconsciously depending on their teachers. Personal experience tells us that many of these teachers teach students privately at home or in coaching centres. Thus the students are treated as prospective clients, and there is perhaps very little effort expended in nurturing independent, autonomous readers, who even in a commonsensical kind of way may be analytical and occasionally sceptical. This, in a way, contributes to strengthening the stranglehold of neo-colonialism over these institutions – and by extension, over Bangladesh.

The answers to the sixth question about the kinds of help the students get in trying to understand literary texts suggest that the maximum numbers of students have included option “a. Take help of senior members of my family and/or classmates and friends.” The second highest number of students included option “b. Use English to Bengali/English to English dictionaries,”

while the third included option was “d. Take help of reference books,” and many others included option “e. Take help of the class notes.” The high percentage of the vague answers “more than one” and the closeness in percentage of the choices (“a,” “b,” “d,” “e,”) indicate that the students surveyed simultaneously use several techniques to access such texts. However, out of all of them, the use of class notes is the most popular option. It reinforces one vague option (“I try to interpret it in the footsteps of the teacher”) of the previous table. Another noteworthy fact is revealed in option “c” about reading Indian/bazaar notes. True or false, not all students surveyed are heeding the advice of teachers, as more than half listed it as one of the aids, while only a few people saw it as important. The popularity of options “b” about dictionaries and “d,” about reference books in the preference organisation table (second and third best, respectively) suggests that some students are quite capable of independent enterprise, particularly, perhaps when it comes to understanding the literary texts for examination purposes. However, we think the use of reference books is seldom resorted to by most students, while the use of dictionaries implies that the respondent students for the most part cannot understand the English literary texts, other than discretely. Thus, they may remain unaware of the colonial and neo-colonial context of English literary studies in a dependent nation-state like Bangladesh, even when they go for higher education or enter professional life.

The seventh question was a vital one asked to find out the attitude of English-medium students regarding English literary texts more clearly. The language-centred option “d,” about improving English, appeared as the most important in preference table, being included by the vast majority of the respondents. The majority also included the purely utilitarian/exam-centred option “a,” third highest in terms of preference. The response to these two options suggests that many students take English literature primarily as a tool for improving their English language skill. The aesthetic-motive-based option “b” about pleasure was included in the list of choices by a great many respondents and comes as second most important in the preference table. If we correlate this with the option “c” about the family tradition of reading English books (selected by a good number, but preferred by none), we see that a good number of English-medium students claim to have this heritage, which is suspect, considering the explosion in English-medium schools only in the nineties of the last century. More than half of the respondents admitted that a desire for learning about western culture played a part in inspiring them in their study of English literature (option “f”), while more than two-thirds of the respondents included the option (“e”) that in Bangladeshi society, it was necessary to study English as the language of privilege. In the preference organisation table these options have negligible representation, which suggests that these ideas are latent in the mind of the students and speak of a kind of

neo-colonial hegemonic hold of English language and literature over many, if not most of the students of the English-medium schools. The fact that a great many respondents went for vague options or clicked several options in an apparently incoherent manner, made clear by the poor representation or no representation of many options in the preference organisation table, indicates that many students are probably quite confused about their reasons for studying English literature, and the methods they should employ, creating an atmosphere of necessary dependence on their teachers, many of whom teach privately, and whose quality, therefore, is compromised by their pursuit of a continuing income. Thus, students acquire very shallow and potentially harmful knowledge about the English literary texts. The lack of conviction or intent makes them susceptible to unconscious hybridisation and cognitive and cultural disenfranchisement. The neo-colonial world *disorder* and its cultural expressions can be more harmful, perhaps, to these students, than the Bengali medium students who have at least the Bengali language and a kind of knowledge of Bengali literature to fall back upon.

The eighth question was about extracurricular reading. As the preference table suggests, the respondent students read novels most (option “b”) followed by newspapers (choice “a”) and short stories (choice “d”) in their spare time. The gap regarding English newspapers in the main answer table and the preference table (fourth choice in terms of inclusion and second in preference) suggests that the students are confused about the importance of English newspapers. Thus, contrary to popular belief, the students probably are not as inclined to learn about the world, including perhaps its grossly unequal neo-colonial power relations, as generally assumed. Thus, the danger of imbibing or internalising the neo-colonial cultures/values associated with the English literary texts that are taught at these institutions, as part of compulsory or optional courses, is far greater.

The ninth question about the teachers’ teaching technique was crucial. The option of contextualisation (choice “c”) was included by almost all respondents, and was most important to them, followed by “paraphrasing” (“a”). A good number of respondent students included (choice “b”) – “relating the text to everyday life” and (choice “d”) – “relating the text to other texts....” The second option preferred by the third highest number of students indicates that the English-medium teachers tend to compare and contrast texts and authors with the belief that they have some kind of *universal value*, and they also want to connect them with their/the students’ day-to-day experience. Personal experience leads us to infer that many teachers/students might in this context go/actually go for facilely generalising about the source cultures/societies of the English literary texts, and many young learners may subconsciously assimilate their dominant values. The inclusion of paraphrasing referred to by many students (choice “a”) and considered “most commonly followed” by the second

highest number of students suggests an apparent discrete bottom-up strategy being used by teachers which might ignore the quite insidious/very clear hegemonic potential of many literary texts. Texts like Lamb's *Tales from Shakespeare* or George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, in the context of the demise of socialism might give the impression that western literature is of universal value or that there can be no alternative to studying or becoming knowledgeable about western literature and culture. In short, the students are probably taught in a superficial kind of way, and there lies the possibility of culturally alienating/politically "inoculating" these students against anti-colonial thoughts and resistance for the rest of their lives. In a highly unsatisfactorily "decolonised" developing/dependent nation like Bangladesh, many will grow up never questioning the relationship between the indigenous ruling/owning class, discursive power constructions and world capitalism, in short the neo-colonial west-controlled world *disorder*.

We have seen in the respective questions for teachers, the vague picture of English literature classes regarding contextualisation of the texts in terms of western history and culture. This becomes clearer here from the respondent students' answers to the tenth question. The answers suggest that most teachers occasionally resort to contextualising the literary texts as "Western." The negative answer of a few, side-by-side with the emphatic "Yes" answer of a good number of respondent students, suggests that the colonial/post-colonial context of the texts as well as the neo-colonial world *disorder* of the present era is not perhaps kept in view. The absence of any "No" answers in the corresponding Teachers' Table, makes it quite clear that some teachers do not connect the texts with western history/popular culture etc. or term them as "western," nor do they wish to. Thus some teachers might be acting as unconscious agents of neo-colonial powers with which English-medium schools in Bangladesh perhaps have more, though subtle links than Bengali-medium ones.

The answer to the eleventh question about non-western English texts in the syllabus is quite similar to the respective question for teachers. There were no such texts prescribed in most schools. If we think about the inconsistency between only a couple of "Yes" answers with the reply of "A few" by the second highest number of respondent students we understand that the students are either confused about the nomenclature or had an insignificant number of such texts in their curriculum. The colonial hangover, the neo-colonial hegemony and ignorance of the postcolonial category of non-western literature in English may well be the reasons behind this condition.

As the twelfth table suggests, the vast majority of O-level students who answered the question are reluctant to take English literature at A-level, perhaps because, they were not impressed enough by the teaching of English literature in previous years, or they did not like literature for academic study, or they

thought they would not do well at that level, if they take English literature. Alarming, many of these students probably never get the opportunity to study English literature critically at pre/O-level education and are therefore likely to remain ill-equipped to deal with the deleterious effects of studying English literature in such a way. Many are likely never to become aware of neo-colonialism or late capitalistic hegemony, or become critical of the grossly unequal world order and remain indifferent to other literatures or cultures than the ones inscribed in those literary texts.

Only 26 respondents, who were A-level students at the time the research was conducted, were supposed to answer the thirteenth question about whether they wanted to take English as a major in the university. A-level students' ideas seem to be a little different from the students who answered the previous question, with most showing interest in considering the possibility of taking English literature at the university level. Around one-third of A-level students surveyed, were, however, unwilling to proceed to higher study in English literature, while more than a fifth did not answer the question at all, who perhaps were confused or uncertain about their future study plans. The present reality of public and private university English departments of which the writers are personally cognisant, is that very few English-medium students end up taking English literature as major. Thus the students' superficial study of English literature in school does not subsequently much benefit their country, or indeed, themselves. Their experience of English literature makes them unconsciously fall back upon this literature, its values and English/western culture(s) in their lives; at least some of the students' alienation from their own culture and people may be attributed to this."¹⁰ Summarily, for many students, the study of English literature becomes/seems like a futile venture – however, it may act as a brake upon these students ever taking up the cudgel to fight against US-European hegemony or cultural imperialism.

Limitations of the Survey

The survey was conducted only in some major English-medium schools in Dhaka. A survey involving English-medium schools country-wide would certainly have been preferable. The owners of different English medium schools were in general quite shy. The teachers had to circulate the questionnaire among their students, often surreptitiously or without informing

¹⁰ We speak of some students of English medium schools becoming alienated from Bengali/Bangladeshi culture and attribute it partially to the superficial study of English literature. That there is a marked difference between many English and Bengali medium school students is quite apparent to many an educated and not-so-educated Bengali/Bangladeshi. However, we agree that some of the students of English medium schools may not be alienated, but this fact can be attributed more to the influence of their families rather than these “cosmopolitan” or “international” English medium schools.

the school authorities, or outside the school premises, because of the fear of non-cooperation and censure, as well as incomprehension on the part of school authorities and other teachers; without these limitations, the sample size would have been much bigger. The authors were not given the opportunity to observe classes in progress and had to take recourse to the first author's first-hand experience of observing English literature classes at English-medium schools, and clues from informal talks with some teachers and students gathered by both the authors. There were also a few limitations in the questionnaire design: there were no questions connecting the pedagogy of English literature with politics in the Teachers' Questionnaire, due to the taboo-nature of politics within this sector. The study is also loosely bound to a kind of *neo-Marxist-inspired post-colonial theoretical framework*, perhaps making it academically problematic for some. The study's findings would be better reinforced were there a series of class room observations for understanding actual practice in the classroom (although the first author as a teacher in several English-medium schools, had opportunities to act as a participant observant of a kind), and in-depth interviews as well as content-analysis of textbooks and other teaching materials. The questionnaires could have been more detailed (open-ended) with options for writing answers, rather than multiple-choice. Due to serious time-constraints, teacher and student apathy, and the lack of cooperation of many school authorities, lack of financial and logistical supports as well as the preliminary/tangential nature of the survey – the first of its kind in Bangladesh – we could not also make it more rigorous. Also, lacking an adequate training in statistical analyses, as well as the difficulty in obtaining such software, we could not statistically analyse the results of our limited survey, something that any future quantitative survey should have. We believe there should be Bangladesh-wide surveys, both qualitative and quantitative to follow up the present one. It should include among other things, content analysis, discourse analysis, i.e. examining the actual dialogue in the classroom, in-depth interviews of teachers and students, as well as administrators of these schools, detailed questionnaires, statistical analyses, country-wide classroom observations, interviews of members of civil society, academics along with teachers and students of public and private university English departments, rigorous economic analysis of the roles of these English-medium schools in Bangladesh, and so on. These will clarify to what extent our conclusions from the survey results are cogent and dependable.

English Literary Studies at English-medium Schools of Bangladesh: The Question of Post-colonial Pedagogy

English literature is being taught at many English-medium schools in Bangladesh, following an international curriculum, for enhancing the linguistic skills of students, making them appreciative of the literary classics of the land

whose educational system is functioning in Bangladesh with some local variations. The teachers use basic linguistic analysis as well as bringing in real-life examples from the two countries and cultures involved, viz. Bangladesh and the United Kingdom/the west, in an inchoate kind of way. Students are left to their own devices – browsing the Internet or reading western notes, which give the summary and a skeletal analysis to understand the literary texts. In the absence of any worthwhile access to Bengali literature, let alone other non-western literatures in English translation or written in English, many if not most students are bound to remain inept and myopic in appreciating literature in a truly cosmopolitan kind of way. Thus the vast majority of the students do not opt to study English literature at the O-/A-levels. Very few of the students ever end up studying English literature in depth at the tertiary level in public and private university English departments, despite their marked linguistic advantage over students who do their secondary and higher education at Bengali-medium institutions. The majority of English-medium students finish their pre-tertiary education without being aware of “other” literatures. Some of them form the view that English/western literature and the values and prejudices they inscribe many a time are normal, and anything else is, at the least, quaint, and perhaps for a few students even “pathologically abnormal.” The following statement quoted by Gauri Viswanathan, in her article entitled “The Beginnings of English Literary Study in India,” made by an Englishman in the nineteenth century, seems to be valid for at least a small fraction of students, evidenced by both the personal experiences of the authors and the findings of this survey:

As the following statement suggests, the English literary text functioned as a surrogate Englishman in his highest and most perfect state: “The Indians [in our case Bangladeshis] daily converse with the best and wisest Englishman [in our case, the Englishman or the westerner] through the medium of their works, and form ideas, perhaps higher ideas of our nation than if their intercourse with it were of a more personal kind.” (437)

This actual or prospective situation needs to be dealt with. The following measures can be taken towards the decolonisation of pedagogical practices in teaching English literature at these institutions, and reshaping them, in order to provide world-class education – something they often fail to do, despite the promise suggested by the ubiquitous “International” in their names:

1. The English literary texts should be taught keeping in mind their lexical, literary, political, social and artistic aspects. The inherent hegemonic potential found in certain if not many literary texts should be neutralised via a critique of the politics involved, by focusing on the marginalised characters, issues, and so on. Overall, the teachers should avoid universalising the texts by pursuing

abstractions, and instead, should make the specific cultural context of the texts clear to the young learners. A focus on the differences and asymmetries between the English or Western culture(s)/source-culture of the texts and Bengali/Bangladeshi culture might also be fruitful in this context.

2. English-medium schools should try to include mother-tongue literature as a compulsory subject up to A-level (or equivalent) stage. The schools should also try to have non-western literary classics in English translation or written in English in the syllabus, so that the students do not consider western literature(s) to be the sole “world literature.” Echoing some of the sentiments of the African writer, academic and theorist Ngugi Wa Thiong’o in his essay “On the Abolition of the English Department” (1972), we want to say, “We reject the primacy of English literature and culture [in English-medium schools of Bangladesh]” (439), otherwise these schools cannot claim to be properly international or cosmopolitan. We however do not believe that these schools should dispense with English as the medium of instruction for subjects other than Bengali, or that the government should not introduce a *uniform* system of school education, which respects the varieties of need and abilities of Bangladeshi children and young adults.

3. English literature teachers of English-medium schools should be trained in contemporary theories and methods of literary analysis, including post-colonial theories, in order to enable them to decolonise English literature and also open up the varied aspects of the literary texts and their contexts before their students.

4. Teachers should encourage more students to take English literature at O-/A-levels and later study English literature at universities. However, in doing so, they should also inculcate a rational awareness of the issues surrounding, and the connections between, English/western literature, colonialism, neo-colonialism, western cultural imperialism, and so on. The condition of pedagogy is, as Lawrence Phillips points out, “faced with the unfamiliar culture of the [former] colonizer, the other of Western discourse also develops ways of knowing and comprehending the unknown – although this counter discourse is excluded from the “knowledge” recognized in the academy [western, but also to an extent of the post-colonial nation states] or, at best, admitted as material for anthropological study” (353-54). Students, whether in such schools as have been mentioned or otherwise, must be encouraged to take active, critical roles when engaging with literary texts, create counter-discourses, while at the same time immerse themselves in English literature for the sake of attaining or increasing fluency. Thus, they make a worthwhile attempt to avoid becoming myopic imitators or syncretistic mimics of western culture.

Conclusion

English literature has been an essential part of the syllabus of English-medium schools from early in the colonial era, and the English-medium stream has remained/survived in the educational arena of Bangladesh despite the experience of two independences. In an era of globalisation, English literature is being taught to a far greater number of students of the upper, upper middle and middle classes without a systematic or unified pedagogical methodology to guide its teachers. Texts are often taught ahistorically, without situating them within the appropriate social, political and cultural contexts, as well as without reference to the postcolonial/neo-colonial world in which the students live. Teachers are alienating some if not many students from their own literary culture and history by not tackling the question of colonial inheritance as well as neo-colonial hegemony. There is a need for training teachers to become readers with a more nuanced understanding of the texts, which can lead to an enhancement of student standards. Such an awareness can save both teachers and students from becoming victims of educational and cultural imperialism, and ultimately serve to make English literary studies in the English-medium schools more balanced and effective, and lead to a significant improvement in the standard of English literary studies at every level of Bangladesh's educational system, as in other dependent nation-states with English-medium schools of the same type.

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Appendix 1**Results of Teachers' Questionnaire****Table 1**

Educational Qualification	Percentage (%)
Postgraduate	81.81 %
Foreign Graduate	18.18 %
Foreign MA	9.09 %
Foreign M. Phil	0 %
Bangladeshi PhD	0 %
Foreign PhD	0 %
No answer	9.09%

Table 2

Educational Background (Higher Secondary Level)	Percentage (%)
English-medium	45.45 %
Bengali medium	45.45 %
Madrakah or others	0%
No answer	9.09%

Table 3

Family's Economic Background	Percentage (%)
Upper Class	9.09 %
Upper-Middle Class	18.18 %
Middle Class	54.54 %
Lower-Middle Class	18.18 %
No answer	0%

Table 4

Question	Choices	Percentage (%)
Why have you chosen to teach English literature?	a. I like English literature	63.6%
	b. I feel I am helping improve the standard of English of the students	72.7%
	c. I think I am helping the students to become cultured	36.4%
	d. My family always wanted me to be a teacher of English	27.3%
	e. I am interested in Western culture	18.2%
	f. It gives me prestige	0%
	Others	27.3%
	More than one	18.2%
	No answer	0%

Preference organisation

a	54.5%
b	27.3%
c	0%
d	0%
e	0%
f	0%
Others	18.2%

Table 5

Question	Choices	Percentage (%)
Do you think it is enough to understand a literary text lexically?	Yes	0%
	No	36.4%
	To a certain extent	63.6%

Table 6

Question	Choices	Percentage(%)
If your answer is 'No' then what are the things that you tell the students to do to achieve a thorough understanding of a literary text?	a. To try to understand the text stylistically by using dictionaries of literary terms	100%
	b. To try to understand the text thematically by reading Indian notes	75%
	c. To try to understand the text thematically by reading Western notes	100%
	d. To try to understand the text thematically by reading Western criticism (<i>Twentieth Century Views, Case Book, etc</i>)	75%
	e. To try to understand it thematically by using English to Bengali dictionaries and paraphrases	75%
	Others	25%
	More than one	100%
	No answer	0%

Preference organisation

a	50%
b	0%
c	25%
d	25%
e	0%
others	0%

Table 7

Question	Choices	Percentage(%)
How do you interpret a literary text most often?	a. Try to interpret it in the footsteps of my teachers	54.5%
	b. Try to interpret it as an interconnected whole	63.6%
	c. Try to interpret it by connecting it with its context (social, political, cultural etc.)	81.8%
	d. Try to interpret it by applying contemporary literary theories	45.5%
	e. Try to interpret it by comparing it with Bengali literary text	27.3%
	Others	63.6%
	More than one	81.8%
	No answer	0%

Preference organisation

a	18.2%
b	36.4%
c	36.4%
d	0%
e	0%
Others	0%

Table 8

Question	Choices	Percentage (%)
Which of the following ways do you use most in class to teach a literary text?	a. Paraphrasing	72.7%
	b. Translating the text into Bengali	18.2%
	c. Relating the text to our everyday life	63.6%
	d. Relating the text to its context	63.6%
	Others	18.2%
	More than one	72.7%
	No answer	0%

Preference organisation

a	45.5%
b	0%
c	27.3%
d	18.2%
Others	0%

Table 9

Question	Choices	Percentage (%)
Do you bring in instances from western history, popular culture (cinema, music, bestseller books etc.) to contextualise the literary texts that you teach?	Yes	36.4%
	No	0%
	Sometimes	63.6%
	No answer	0%

Table 10

Question	Choices	Percentage (%)
What kinds of texts do you like to read outside the ones you teach?	a. English Newspapers	90.9%
	b. English Novels	90.9%
	c. English Plays	45.5%
	d. English Short Stories	90.9%
	e. English Journals	54.5%
	f. Books of Literary Theory	18.2%
	g. Books of History	36.4%
	h. Books of Philosophy	18.2%
	i. Books of Social Sciences	18.2%
	None of the above	0%
	More answer	100%
No answer	0%	

Preference organisation

a	45.5%
b	18.2%
c	9.09%
d	9.09%
e	0%
f	0%
g	0%
h	0%
i	0%

Table 11

Question	Choices	Percentage (%)
Do you have any text from the non-western world written in English included in your syllabus?	Yes	9.09%
	No	72.7%
	A few	18.2%
	No answer	0%

*Results of Students' Questionnaire***Table 1**

Family's Economic Background	Percentage (%)
Upper Class	10.6%
Upper-Middle Class	55.4%
Middle Class	34%
Lower-Middle Class	0%
No answer	0%

Table 2

Parents' Educational Qualification	Percentage (%)
Ph. D	4.3%
Masters	68%
Graduate	11%
Higher Secondary/'A' Level	6.4%
Secondary/'O' Level	2.1%
Others	6.4%
No answer	2.1%

Table 3

Question	Choices	Percentage (%)
Do you think it is enough to understand a literary text lexically?	Yes	10.6%
	No	34.07%
	Sometimes	53.2%
	No answer	2.13%

Table 4

Question	Choices	Percentage (%)
If your answer is 'No', then what things do you do mostly to achieve a thorough understanding of a literary text?	a. I try to understand it thematically by reading Indian notes.	75%
	b. I try to understand it thematically by reading western notes.	81.3%
	c. I try to understand it by reading western criticism.	81.3%
	d. I try to take recourse to materials available on it on the net.	81.3%
	Others	43.8%
	More than one	75%
	No answer	0%

Preference Organisation

a	6.25%
b	25%
c	6.25%
d	37.5%
Others	25%

Table 5

Question	Choices	Percentage(%)
In what ways do you interpret a literary text, when you write about it?	a. I try to interpret it in the footsteps of the teacher.	87.2%
	b. I try to understand the text as an interconnected whole.	93.6%
	c. I try to understand the text by connecting it with its context (social, political, cultural, historical etc.).	91.5%
	Others	12.8%
	More than one	89.4%
	No answer	0%

Preference Organisation

a.	8.51%
b.	46.8%
c.	38.3%
Others	4.26%

Table 6

Question	Choices	Percentage(%)
What kinds of help do you take most often to study a text, as it is explained or after it has been explained in class?	a. Take help of senior members of my family and/or classmates and friends.	78.7%
	b. Use English to Bengali/English to English dictionaries	74.5%
	c. Read Indian/bazaar notes	55.3%
	d. Take help of reference books	72.3%
	e. Take help of the class notes.	70.2%
	Others	21.3%
	More than one	83%
	No answer	2.13%

Preference Organisation

a	14.9%
b	17%
c	4.26%
d	14.9%
e	29.8%
other	12.8%

Table 7

Question	Choices	Percentage (%)
Why do you read English literary texts on your syllabus?	a. To do well in the exam.	85.1%
	b. For pleasure	80.9%
	c. My family has a tradition of reading English books.	61.7%
	d. To improve my English.	83%
	e. Society values English as a language.	72.3%
	f. I want to acquaint myself with western culture.	59.6%
	g. Others	80.9%
	More than one	85.1%
	No answer	2.13%

Preference Organisation

a	21.3%
b	31.9%
c	0%
d	34%
e	8.51%
f	4.26%
others	0%

Table 8

Question	Choices	Percentage (%)
What kinds of English writings do you like to read outside your syllabus?	a. English Newspapers	80.9%
	b. English Novels	87.2%
	c. English Plays	72.3%
	d. English Short Stories	85.1%
	e. English Journals	72.3%
	None of the above	8.51%
	More than one	89.4%
	No answer	0%

Preference Organisation

a	21.3%
b	53.2%
c	0%
d	21.3%
e	0%

Table 9

Question	Choices	Percentage (%)
Which of the following ways is used most in your classes to teach a literary text?	a. Paraphrasing or rephrasing.	70.2%
	b. Relating the text to our everyday life.	78.7%
	c. Relating the text to its context.	93.6%
	d. Relating the text to other texts by the author on the syllabus or not on it.	72.3%
	Others	17%
	More than one	85.1%
	No answer	0%

Preference Organisation

a	25.5%
b	23.4%
c	36.2%
d	4.26%
Other	8.51%

Table 10

Question	Choices	Percentage (%)
Do your teachers bring in instances from western history, popular culture (cinema, music, bestseller books etc.) in class to contextualize the literary texts that you are taught?	Yes	40.4%
	No	17%
	Sometimes	42.6%
	No answer	0%

Table 11

Question	Choices	Percentage (%)
Do you have any text from the non-western world written in English included on your syllabus?	Yes	17%
	No	53.2%
	A few	27.7%
	No answer	2.10%

Table 12

Question (For O-level students only)	Choices	Percentage (%)
Would you take A –Level English Literature?	Yes	25%
	No	75%
	No answer	0%

Table 13

Question (For A-level students only)	Choices	Percentage (%)
Would you take English Literature as the major at the university level?	Yes	46.15%
	No	30.76%
	No answer	23.07%