Representation of (In)equality in *English for Today* (Class-VIII)

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ABSTRACT

A textbook has immense importance in students’ academic life. It not only contains lessons, activities or tasks, but also contains ideology of a country through its language, content or discourse. Therefore, during designing or developing a textbook it requires a balance in the content and the context and needs to be equal in terms of gender, class, religion and profession. However, there are inequalities, biases, stereotyping, under-representation or misrepresentation of social classes, ages, races, religions, gender and professions in ELT books of different contexts. This research reveals the unequal representation of social classes in the textbook *English for Today (EFT)*. The content of *EFT* is predominantly upper and middle class centric. The textbook excludes lower classes from the content. The *EFT* provides discriminatory depiction as well and thus reinforces social hegemony. Using Fairclough’s (1995) three dimensional model of analysis—description, interpretation and explanation—this study critically analyzes the contexts and images of *EFT*, for class VIII, and unfolds the unequal representation of social classes in *EFT*.

**Keywords**: Textbook, social class, inequality, representation.

Introduction

Textbook is a document which empowers students with knowledge and skills. Saleem and Thomas (2011, p. 18) opine that textbooks are influential tool for teaching and learning. Textbooks can contribute to students’ perception of development regarding social surroundings. According to Byram and Flemming (1998, as cited in Jahan, 2012, p. 78) textbooks and teaching materials “try to raise learners’ critical awareness and sensitivity”. This critical awareness informs students about the social inequalities in real life and help build qualities to deal with these injustices (Jahan, 2012).
Unfortunately studies on textbooks in different countries show that textbooks have problematic content in terms of representing race, culture, social classes, age, religion and disability (Cunningsworth, 1995; Hutchinson & Torres, 1994; Jibreel, 2015; Litz, 2005; McDonough & Shaw, 2003, cited in Bouzid, 2016). Textbooks are expected to be equal in representing social class, gender, profession, culture, ethnicity and religion. The reality is textbooks are “published within the political and economic constraints of markets, resources, and power…And what counts as legitimate knowledge is the result of complex power relations and struggles among identifiable class, race, gender/sex, and religious groups” (Allen & Wallace, 2008, p. 153). According to Bouzid (2016, p. 114), problematic representation of race, culture, social class, gender not only affects the students’ learning process but also corrupts their attitudes towards surroundings.

Regarding textbooks in Bangladesh, similar anomaly is evident. One of the main objectives of education in Bangladesh is to develop non-communalism and friendliness among students in terms of race, creed, and religion and to eradicate gender discrimination (National Education Policy, 2010). It has been recommended therefore to avoid discriminatory contents in relation to race, religion, ethnicity, gender, profession and financial status while developing the curricula of English (National Curriculum, 2012, p. 10). Chowdhury and Kabir, however, observe that there is a mismatch between the objective and the curricula (2014). Shirin (2010) and Kabir (2015) found biases and sexism in the content of English for Today for class IX-X. Besides, primary level (class I to class V) EFT has the problem of cultural imperialism in representing Bangladesh’s culture (Jahan, 2012).

Few other studies investigate the issue of misrepresentation of gender in EFT (see Bidushi, 2016; Kabir, 2015; Shirin, 2010); but barely any research is available on the representation of social class. Therefore, this study analyzes the contents of EFT, particularly the one for class VIII, to understand the nature of its representation of various social classes. The study specifically seeks answer to the following questions:

1. Which social classes does the EFT serve?
2. How are different classes represented in the textbook?
Literature review

There are inequalities, biases, stereotyping, under-representation or misrepresentation of social classes, ages, races, religions, gender and professions in ELT books from different contexts (Arikan, 2005; Bose, 2008; Bouzid, 2016; Gibatdinov, 2011; Guseynova, 2008; Lee, 2011; Mustapha, 2014; Saleem & Thomas, 2011). Cunningsworth (1995) asserts that textbooks practice exclusion of social classes and allocate asymmetrical spaces to different classes (cited in Bouzid, 2016, p. 115). Yaqoob and Zubair (2012, cited in Bouzid, 2016, p. 115) also doubt that “ELT textbooks may work to empower and dis-power certain social classes and that they are designed in a way that keep the uneven division of powers between different social classes by keeping the lower powerless and the upper class powerful”. As an illustration, two prominent ELT books (The New Headway and Think Ahead to First Certificate) give priority to the middle class; whereas the marginal class remains invisible in the content and are never visualized as the member of civilized society (Arikan, 2005, p. 37). Ferree and Hall (1996, cited in Manza and Schynde, 2000) confirm that in northwestern countries textbooks mark unequal representation of social classes, genders and races. In Asia as well, for instance in South Korea, EFL textbooks uplift upper-middle class images in its contents (Lee, 2011, p. 49). Adair (2005, p. 576) in this regard points out that research works are not studying class stratification on a serious note.

Methodology

To find out the answer of the research questions a qualitative content analysis was carried out. Qualitative approach explores a problem and provides an in-depth understanding of a central phenomenon (Creswell, 2012). Cresswell (2012) observes, qualitative approach analyzes the data and interprets it for meaningful findings. The findings of the qualitative study are comprehensive that helps to understand any social reality (Ary et al., 2010, p. 23). However, to analyze data Fairclough’s (1989) three dimensional model has been used. Data have been analyzed in three levels: description, interpretation and explanation. The content of EFT has been analyzed by focusing on the following criteria:

a. The frequency of representations of characters belonging to different social classes
b. Portrayal of these characters in picture and images
c. Representation of personality traits of these characters
d. Representation of women belonging to different social classes
e. Allotment of role and space for these characters in texts, conversations, dialogues etc.
f. Sequential place of these characters in texts, conversations, dialogues etc.

Some of the units, lessons and sections have been intentionally left out as the author found them irrelevant to the present discussion.

Data analysis and findings

Description of data

Unit 1 of EFT is titled as ‘Going on a Foreign Trip’. There are three images in the title page of the unit. One shows the image of an airplane and passengers who are heading to get into it. Another one is the image of immigration in an airport and passengers are passing through it. The last one is of inside of a plane where an airhostess is serving drink to a girl. Lesson 1 of Unit 1 is titled as ‘At the Airport’. This lesson is about two cousins Mita and Zara and their journey to Thailand. It shows an image of a family sitting in the waiting lounge of an airport. In this image the man wears a polo t-shirt, casual pants and shoes; the lady is well dressed with braided hair, saree and bangles; and two girls wear frock, pump-shoes and they make pony-tail in their hair. The two girls also hold a bag in their neck. This family is being seen to carry a trolley bags with them.

Lesson 2 of Unit 1 is about “Filling in a form”. In this lesson, students get to know about detailed information of Mita’s passport and Thai visa. In exercise C, students have to imagine that they are “travelling to a foreign country”. Then they have to fill up an imaginary immigration departure form. In exercise D, students have to share their experience regarding their “visited foreign countries” with their pair. Lesson 3 of Unit 1 is about ‘Going through Immigration’. Here, the textbook repeats the same picture of the immigration of an airport from the title page of Unit 1. This lesson contains a conversation between Mita and immigration officer in immigration.

Lesson 5 of Unit 1 is titled as ‘Announcement on Board (1)’. Section A represents a picture where passengers are boarded in the plane. Students are met three passengers where a man is well dressed with suit; a girl wears a frock and the lady behind the girl wears salawar-kamij. In section C, students
are introduced with Captain Rashid Akbar of Bangladesh Biman. Here, the
captain informs the passenger about flight details. Lesson 6 of Unit 1 is about
‘Announcement on Board (2)’. Here, section A represents the scenario inside
an airplane where an airhostess briefs the passengers about oxygen mask,
seatbelt, emergency, safety information and so on. In this picture the
airhostess wears a short skirt, formal turtle-neck top and jacket, and high
hills. She also makes a top-bun on her hair.

Lesson 8 of unit 1 is ‘The Destination’. In section A, there is a fill in the
blank exercise on how Mita and her family reach to their destination from the
airport. In this section, besides Mita, Zara, and her uncle Mr. Mazharul
Islam, readers find a taxi driver. The taxi driver takes them to their
destination. After reaching the destination, the driver thanks Mr. Islam for
taking a ride with him. Section B gives the description of a luxurious
apartment of Mita’s uncle. Lesson 9 is ‘The Tha Kha floating market’. In this
floating market the Thai women sell their goods in boat. This lesson talks
about the Tha Kha floating market but does not provide detailed description
of any sellers of this market.

Unit 2 is about ‘Food and Nutrition’. Lesson 1 of Unit 2 is ‘Good food’. In
section A there is a picture of organized classroom where Ms. Rehana
(English teacher) is seen in a saree and with a bun style of hair, and students
are seen in school dress. Here, Ms Rehana talks about the importance of good
and nutritious food. Lesson 3 is ‘Our Daily Diet’. There is a dialogue
between Ms. Rehana and her students regarding their daily diet. Student 1
says “We (we) eat rice, ‘ruti’, fish and meat every day. What else should we
have, teacher?”. Ms. Rehana replies that they have to eat fruits, vegetables
and milk everyday. Lesson 4 is ‘Delicious food’ which starts with the picture
of cake, burger, sandwich and chicken fries. Section C presents a picture of
‘custard’ and provides the recipe of ‘custard’.

Unit 3 is on “Health and Hygiene”. This unit starts with three pictures. In
the first picture there is a tin-shed house. In front of the house a woman is
seen sweeping the yard. She is dressed up in a saree and bangles and a hair
bun. In the third picture a girl is seen exercising. She wears salwar-kamiz and
bangles with braided hair. Lesson 1 is on ‘Health’ which presents images of
two boys. The first one is of an unhealthy boy wearing a half-pant, t-shirt and
sandal. The second one presents a healthy boy wearing a shirt, half-pant and
belt in his waist, and shoes. Section B discusses about necessity of good
health and what people should do to become healthy. It says “To (to) keep
ourselves healthy, we have to eat a balanced diet.”. Lesson 4 is on ‘A dialogue’. This lesson starts with a picture where a patient is being checked up by a doctor. In section B there is a conversation between Rabi and the doctor. Rabi has brought his father Mr. Zahir Ali in the clinic for check up. Rabi’s father has severe chest pain. Lesson 5 is titled as ‘A letter’. Rabi has written a letter to Sohel. In the letter, he has mentioned that his father died of lung cancer. Lesson 6 of Unit 3 is ‘Physical exercise’. Here, Mr. Pronoy Larma the physical teacher of Rooppur High Schools is being seen to talk with his student about physical exercise and necessity of it. Lesson 8 of Unit 3 is about ‘Making a class forum’. In this lesson, Ms. Subarna Saha (class teacher) has asked her students to clean their classroom as the cleaner is absent. She has not mentioned the name of the cleaner. The person is addressed by school cleaner. However, the lesson identifies the class teacher as Ms. Subarna Saha and student as Shafiq.

Unit 5 is titled as ‘Making a difference’. This unit starts with a picture where a woman is dressed up in salawar-kamij and selling cloths to the customers. Lesson 1 of Unit 5 is ‘The beginning’. Section A has introduced the audience with Shamima Akhtar, a village girl of Jhenaidah. Once upon a time she suffered a lot but her willpower and determination helps her to remove her sufferings. Now “she runs a small boutique called ‘Oikko Nari Kollayan Shangstha’ in her village”. Lesson 2 is about ‘Flash back’. Here, section A has described Shamima’s past. At the age of 15 years Shamima had to get married with a much older man Amirul Islam against her concern. Lesson 3 is titled as ‘Ever Beautiful Shamima’. Section B has mentioned that Shamima called off her married life with her greedy husband Amirul Islam who “used to abuse her verbally and physically”. Now, she is running her own organization. Lesson 4 is ‘A man who loves trees’. This lesson has talked about Kartik Pramanik, a 63 years old hair dresser. Kartik loves to plant trees.

Unit 6 is about ‘A Glimpse of Our Culture’. Lesson 2 is titled as ‘Nakshi Kantha’. Section B, has described Nakshi Kantha as a traditional craft of Bangladesh and West Bengal of India. This lesson has described how people make the Kantha and which areas are famous for this craft. It has mentioned that now people can find Nakshi Kanthas in many expensive handicrafts shops in cities. But it does not mention anything about those people who make Nakshi Kantha.
Unit 7 is on ‘Different people, different occupation’. Lesson 1 of Unit 7 is titled as ‘Pearls! Pearls! Pearls!’ In this lesson, a woman is seen in a saree who is adorned with heavy pearl necklace and earnings. She is also adorned her hair bun with flower. This is an image of an Asian woman. This lesson has mentioned that a pearl is the symbol of social status and position in ancient Greek and Rome. Lesson 2 is about the Ama divers, the pearl hunting women of Japan. Lesson 3 of Unit 7 is ‘River gypsies in Bangladesh (1)’. Section A starts with two images. In the first image there are nine boats in the river and few people are seated beside the bank of the river. The faces of these people are pale. In the second image there are five tents in the open field surrounded with nature. In this image some people are inside the tents but their faces are not visible. Text B has mentioned that these are the images of river gypsies of Bangladesh. This lesson has talked about the lifestyle and culture of bedey or river gypsies of Bangladesh. It has mentioned that they are the ethnic people of Bangladesh. This lesson has also stated that they (bedey) can leave an evil spirit in someone’s body by magic or special powers. In section B, students are met with Sohan and Jihan (student of sociology at Dhaka University) who went to a bedey camp to talk with them. There is a conversation between a bedey woman and Jihan. In the conversation, the bedey woman is addressed as ‘woman’. The text does not mention her name. From the conversation people get to know that monthly income of a bedey family is around 3000 taka. Lesson 4 is on ‘River gypsies in Bangladesh (2)’. This lesson has mentioned many voluntary organizations are running special boat school for river gypsies now (Hoque, et. al., 2012: 84). There is an image where audience can see some children are going to school by holding books on their hands (Hoque, et. al., 2012: 83). Boys are dressed in half-pants with half-sleeve shirts or t-shirts. The audience can see a boy is going to school on bare feet. Girls are seen in half-sleeve frock and they have braids and pony-tail in their hair.

Unit 8 is titled as ‘News! News! News!’ Lesson 1 of Unit 8 is ‘News! News! News! (1)’. Section A has started with the image of an aged man in a pajama-panjabi who is seated in the chair and read a newspaper. Section B, is about a six year old Wasik Farhan-Roopkotha who is a youngest computer expert. Wasik is seen in seated on the sofa by wearing a pool-over jacket. He is skilled in computer gaming in this young age. He is from Bangladesh and now lives in London. His mother Cynthia Farhan-Risha has mentioned to BBC that they will apply to Guinness World records for listing his name as younger computer expert. In section C people get to know from an interview that Wasik wants to do his higher education in Computer Science and
establish his own computer firm in future. Lesson 2 of Unit 8 is ‘News! News! News! (2)’. This lesson also starts with an image where a man is dressed in formal suit and tie is seated in front of the desk and read a newspaper. This lesson has discussed about the news worthiness and the criteria of news. Lesson 3 of Unit 8 is also titled as ‘News! News! News! (3)’. From this lesson people get to know about Rona Begum who started her business with 2,500 taka and a sewing machine in 1997. Now she is running her own small production house of fashion garments. Rona has mentioned about her hardship and miseries in her earlier life. She also said that when she started her business at first, her family did not support her. However, they support her now. She is the general secretary of Women Business Forum of Sylhet and she received award as well. Lesson 5 of Unit 8 is about ‘Apply with your CV’. In section A, there is an image of six teenage girls and boys who are working in the factory. Students can see pliers, screwdriver, switch box, wires etc. on the table. Here, girls are in salwar-kamij and boys are in half-sleeve casual shirt. In section B, there is a report on Rumi Akhter Rina a student of class 8. She is a daughter of a day laborer. She wants to be an electrical engineer. She did a six month long vocational training in ‘electrical and house wiring’; a program organized by an NGO. In section D, there is an application of Rumi addressing to the Program Director of Vocational Skills Training Project. Section E has mentioned about an interview session between Rumi and the director.

Unit 9 is ‘Things that have Changed Our Life’. Lesson 2 of Unit 9 is titled as ‘The History of the Wheel’. Here, students find the character of Mr. Ramis, an English teacher and Rubina a student. Section E has provided the basic information regarding Bangladesh Railway Service. In section F, students have to do a pair work where they will play the role of railway official and reporter. Students are asked to make dialogue regarding Bangladesh Railway Service. Lesson 4 of Unit 9 is ‘Taking off’. This lesson has discussed the invention of airplane. In section B, there is an image of runway where a plane is being seen to be taking off. There are images of six gentlemen. Among these six men, three are suited-booted and they are seen to wear caps also. Another three are dressed in formal shirt-pants and shoes. In section D, again there is a conversation between Mr. Ramis and a student Sohan regarding modern Aircraft. Lesson 5 of unit 9 is about ‘Future aircraft’. This lesson has talked about the fastest Falcon Hypersonic Technology Vehicle-2 (Falcon HTV-2) and its features. In section C, students have to play an imagery role of a reporter and they have to make an interview dialogue with chief-engineer of HTV-2 Launch Project. Lesson 6 of Unit 9 is
‘Paper has advanced our life’. This lesson has discussed how the invention of paper makes our life easy. Afterwards, section B has talked about the advantages of technology besides discussing about the necessities of paper. It has mentioned “In (in) our age, you can carry the entire world of knowledge in digital form in your laptop bag”.

**Interpretation of data**

The target audience or receiver of this textbook is class VIII students of Bangladesh. The approximate age of the target audience is 13-15 years old. Unit 1 of EFT is all about a foreign trip to Bangkok. Through Mita’s visit to Bangkok, Unit 1 has tried to educate the students about the formal procedures which people have to follow during their foreign trip. In this Unit, students get to know about how they have to fill up the departure form when they are travelling to a foreign country. It has introduced the students with the Thai culture as well. This unit is not directly concerned with representing any social classes. But when people critically analyze the projection of the unit, then it becomes apparent that it has been representing an elite class lifestyle and perception through visual and textual depictions. By applying the rational intensity, one can easily intuit that only an affluent family can afford a foreign trip for vacation.

Unit 2 is concerned with food and nutrition but it has been also representing upper and middle class perception through visual and textual context. The dressing style of the teachers and students of this unit trigger the view of middle class or upper-class lifestyles. This unit has discussed food and nutrition. In lesson 3 of Unit 2, when a student says *ruti*, rice, fish and meat is her regular diet then the target audience can assume that he/she must belong to an upper or middle classes family. Even when the students are being advised to have fruits and milk regularly as well as with ruti, rice, fish and meat then it automatically represents the food habit of the upper or middle classes. It cannot be denied that lower class families cannot maintain this food habit regularly. Furthermore, this unit has labeled cake, custard, burger, chicken fires etc as delicious food. When the target audiences are acquainted with such kinds of visual and textual representation then they can realize, it is pointed towards upper or middle classes’ food habit.

The lessons of the unit 3 emphasize balanced diet and regular physical exercise for maintaining a good health. Though the primary objective of Unit 3 is to make the students aware about health and hygiene, the demonstrated
content and lifestyle of this unit is again concerned with upper or middle class people. It is known to all that balanced diet is the combination of all kinds of nutrition like carbohydrate, protein, fat and so on. It is quite impossible for lower class people to have the balanced diet and physical exercise regularly. In this unit, students have found the characters of the doctor and the teachers who are considered as upper or middle class people in our society. It has also represented lower-middle classes or lower classes through the character of Rabi’s father Mr. Zahir Ali. He is depicted as unhealthy man who heavily smoked and died of lung cancer. These characterizations of Mr. Zahir Ali have been sustaining the traditional myth that unhealthiness is synonymous to lower classes people. Even this unit has depicted cleanliness through an image of an upper or middle-class village house. This house or family can be interpreted as upper or middle class because of its projection. The image is represented with all affluent facilities as it has its own domestic animals, paddies, tin-shaded house, and sanitary toilet. The house is surrounded with lots of trees as well. In village, who have these things are considered as affluent family. The formation of this unit has been prompting the students to perceive that good health and hygiene is the concern of upper and middle-class people.

Unit 5 has tried to build up the confidence among the students and make them believe that willpower can change everything. This unit has been simultaneously representing lower and middle classes. Students have got to know that how Shamima has changed her life through willpower and determination and the hair dresser Kartik Pramanik tried to keep the nature green by planting trees of its own wish. Shamima’s hard works has made her able to run its own boutique shop. This unit encourages the students to build up their confidence. But if students think about Shamima’s past life then it can fix a notion in students’ mind that lower classes women are tortured by her family and husband. Shamima’s family and husband is the representative of the lower classes in this unit. The main concern of Unit 6 is to introduce the students with the culture of Bangladesh. Nakshi Kantha has been introduced as the traditional craft of Bangladesh. Lesson 2 has mentioned that now expensive handicrafts shops dwellers sell Nakshi Kantha in cities but, it does not mention anything about those people who sew Nakshi Kanthas with love. Nakshi Kanthas are embroidered by the poor people of Bangladesh. Therefore, students can interpret that lesson 2 has ignored the lower classes and emphasized on higher classes.
Lesson 1 of Unit 7 has distinctly represented elite class’s perception through visual and textual data. It has directly claimed that ‘pearls’ are the symbol of social status, class and dignity in Rome and ancient Greek, but the text has portrayed an image of an Asian woman. Therefore, it becomes obvious for the students to interpret that ‘pearls’ are the symbol of prestige and social position in Bangladesh as well. In this Unit, students got to know about river gypsies or bedey of Bangladesh. The primary concern of lesson 3 is to introduce the students with the culture of bedey. To achieve the objective of these lessons, it is expected to have the clear visual representation of their culture. Students are provided knowledge about bedey’s inhabitants in lesson 3, but this representation has not justified the objective of this lesson. It is known to all that river gypsies or bedey belong to lower classes in our society. One important thing is apparent in EFT that it has given the clear visual images of upper and middle classes people, but this projection is missing in the case of lower classes. Thus, divergences in visual representation can be captivated by the learners though bedey people belong to the lower class that’s why this discrepancy has taken place in terms of their visual representation. Even this lesson can lead the students to think that lower class people do not need to have their own name to address them. In this lesson, a bedey woman is called as ‘woman’ only, whereas other upper or middle classes people have their own name like Mrs. Jhuma Islam, Mr. Mazharul Islam, Zara, Jihan, Mrs. Rehana, Rona Begum and so on. This approach can be noticed in other lessons as well. Lower class people are addressed as taxi driver, school cleaner, day laborer, boatman etc. in this textbook. These people are not introduced by their own name.

Unit 8 has aimed to acknowledge the students regarding the features and criteria of news. In this unit, the visual and contextual data are dominated by upper and middle-class representations. This Unit has represented the characters of the reporter, the officials of Guinness World Records and the director of Vocational Skills training Project. Lesson 3 of Unit 8 has depicted a news article on Rona Begum a successful owner of a small garment shop. This article has mentioned that Rona’s earlier life was full with sufferings. Rona’s family did not support her when she started her business. She used to be tortured by her family in the past. Now Rona’s family supports her. Lower class is being represented by Rona’s earlier life. The depiction of Rona’s earlier life can be formed the target audiences’ perception that lower classes women are meant to be abused and rebuked by their family.
Unit 9 has discussed the invention of wheel, papers and aircrafts which make our daily life easy. To discuss these inventions, it has portrayed the characters of the English teacher, the official of Bangladesh Railway, the reporter and the chief engineer of aircrafts. This unit is again ruled by upper and middle-class appearances. The target audience or students might assume that language of lesson 6 of unit 9 is targeted towards upper and middle-class students only. This lesson has mentioned in this digital era “you can carry the whole world in your laptop bag”. By addressing ‘you’ EFT book is including or targeting all of the audiences or students who are going through this line. This address can instill a perception in lower-middle class and lower class students’ mind that they are not included in this ‘you’. In Bangladesh, it is beyond imagination that a lower-middle class or lower class student can have his/her own laptop at the age of 13-15 years.

After analyzing the content of English for Today, it is clearly noticeable that this book has been representing upper and middle class people and their perceptions more. Students can find some representations of the lower classes as well, but they have not been allotted any dominant role in EFT.

Explanation of data

Content of EFT for class VIII reflects our society and societal practices like exclusion, inclusion, social discrimination, scarcity, stereotypes, under-representations and misrepresentations. Nobody can deny that in our society lower class people remain voiceless. Our society is being dominated by the higher class people. Same practices are being sustained by the content of EFT. It has noticeably excluded the lower class people and their notion. The content of EFT is being ruled by upper and middle class approaches. Context of EFT represents social discrepancies by excluding lower classes from the content. Whenever lower classes have been represented in the content they have been given a silent appearance. They have not been given any active role. Through this unequal class representation EFT is sustaining some stereotyping and misrepresentations.

This textbook has been representing the stereotypical perception that lower classes girls or women are always tortured and abused by their family and husband. It has also depicted that lower class people lead unhealthy life like the role of Rabi’s father. In our society, lower class people have a tendency to bow down before the upper class people. This submissive attitude of lower class people has been portrayed in the content of EFT as
well. In Lesson 8 of Unit 1, students find that the taxi driver has thanked Mr. Islam for taking a ride with him. But if people critically think the incident then Mr. Islam should thank the taxi driver as he took them to their destination. *EFT* can represent this humble attitude of Mr. Islam but it does not do so. Had *EFT* portrayed this humble attitude of Mr. Islam then it could have broken down the stereotype that lower class people have to bow down before the upper class people.

It has also stereotyped the river gypsies by saying that they practice black magic. It has been seen that the authority, more specifically educational stakeholders, material and textbook designers have tried to bring river gypsies in mainstream by including them in the textbook, but the stereotypical representations of gypsies create ‘othering’. In an image of a gypsy child, he has been shown on bare feet. This image is sustaining the conventional thought of cast discrimination. As they belong to inferior class, they have to be on bare feet. Upper and middle class lifestyles in *EFT* have been injecting the feelings of poverty among the target audience or students especially, among the middle and lower classes students. When students get to know Mita, Zara and Wasik Farhan-Rupkotha are getting lavish facilities in this early age and at the same time Rabi, Rumi, Akhter, Rina have to think about running their family, then the feeling of scarcity and exclusion are being injected in the target audience or students’ mind. Projections of these characters have been making a clear disparity between upper, middle and lower classes people.

**Conclusion**

This study has conducted an in-depth investigation of the representation of social classes in *EFT* book of class VIII. It reveals the unequal representation of social classes in *EFT*. The researcher has used Fairclough’s (1995) three dimensional models to critically analyze the discourse and images of *EFT*. Through three levels of critical analysis- description, interpretation and explanation; the researcher reveals the unequal representation of social classes in *EFT*. It sustains inequality in terms of representing social classes. The content of *EFT* is controlled by upper and middle classes approaches. It noticeably excludes lower classes from the content. *EFT* provides discriminatory depiction as well.

Textbook writers’ perception has often been reflected in the discourse of textbook which can affect the learners’ mindset (Gharbavi and Mousavi,
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2012 cited in Bidushi, 2016: 129). Hence, textbook writers, syllabus and material designers, policy makers and evaluators need to get proper training on neutral representation of concept like social classes. Material designers have to realize the importance of including socially sensitive issues like religion, caste, social classes and so on in textbooks. According to Kandharaja (2012: 122) teachers have very little role to play during selecting or designing the textbooks. Educational stakeholders specially material designers need to take teachers’ opinions and perceptions during designing and selecting the textbooks.

Teachers need to critically analyze or evaluate the textbooks and materials to identify the conflicting concepts like gender discrimination, biases, negligence, misrepresentation, stertotypicalization and so on. Training is needed for teachers. They should know how to deal with and teach materials which upholds inequality, discrimination, stertotypicalization etc. Educational stakeholders more specifically academics, teachers, policy makers, syllabus and material designers, evaluators etc. should be informed about the biased representations of social classes in EFT. It is known to all, National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) plays a vital role in selection, designing and evaluation of the textbook. Therefore, NCTB needs to have an expert committee comprising educationists, researchers, sociologists, psychologists, academics, and teachers etc. who would uphold neutral perception for developing and evaluating the textbooks.

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**Appendix 1**

**Table 1:** Data from *English for Today* book of class VIII (Haque et al., 2012)

| Units/Lessons | Representation of Social Classes |
|---------------|----------------------------------|
| Unit 1 ‘Going on a Foreign Trip’ |                                    |
| Lesson 1      | Upper class/Upper-middel class    |
| Lesson 2      | Upper class/Upper-middel class    |
| Lesson 3      | Upper class/Upper-middel class    |
| Lesson 4      | Upper class/Upper-middel class    |
| Lesson 5      | Upper class/Upper-middel class    |
| Lesson 6      | Upper class/Upper-middel class    |
| Lesson 7      | Upper class/Upper-middel class    |
| Lesson 8      | Upper class/Upper-middel class    |
| Lesson 9      | Upper class/Upper-middel class    |
| Unit 2 ‘Food and Nutrition’ | Representation of Social Classes |
| Lesson 1      | Middle Class                      |
| Lesson 2      | Upper class and Middle class      |
| Lesson 3      | Upper class and Middle class      |
| Lesson 4      | Upper class and Middle class      |
| Unit 3 ‘Health and Hygiene’ | Representation of Social Classes |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Lesson 1 | Upper class/Middle and Lower Middle class |
| Lesson 4 | Upper class and Lower Middle class |
| Lesson 5 | Lower Middle class |
| Lesson 6 | Middle class |
| Lesson 7 | Upper class/Middle class |
| Lesson 8 | Middle class |
| **Unit 5 ‘Making a Difference’** | Representation of Social Classes |
| Lesson 1 | Middle class |
| Lesson 2 | Lower class |
| Lesson 3 | Middle class |
| Lesson 4 | Lower class |
| **Unit 6 ‘A Glimpse of Our Culture’** | Representation of Social Classes |
| Lesson 2 | Upper class and Middle class |
| Lesson 3 | Lower class |
| **Unit 7 ‘Different People, Different Occupations’** | Representation of Social Classes |
| Lesson 1 | Upper class |
| Lesson 3 | Lower class and Middle class |
| **Unit 8 ‘News! News! News!’** | Representation of Social Classes |
| Lesson 1 | Upper class and Middle class |
| Lesson 2 | Upper class/ Middle class |
| Lesson 3 | Middle class and Lower class |
| Lesson 4 | Lower class |
| Lesson 5 | Lower class and Upper class |
| **Unit 9 ‘Things that have Changed our Lives’** | Representation of Social Classes |
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| Lesson 2          | Middle class Upper class and Middle class |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Lesson 3          | Middle class                               |
| Lesson 4          | Upper class and Middle class               |
| Lesson 5          | Upper class and Middle class               |

### Appendix 2

**Table 2:** Visual data from *English for Today* book of class VIII (Haque et al., 2012)

| Units/Lessons | Images | Representation of Social Classes       |
|---------------|--------|----------------------------------------|
| Unit 1 (p. 1) | ![Image](image1.png) | Upper class/Upper –middle class        |
| Unit 1 (p. 1) | ![Image](image2.png) | Upper class/Upper –middle class        |
| Unit 1 (p. 1) | ![Image](image3.png) | Upper class/Upper –middle class        |
| Unit 1 | Lesson 1 (p. 2) | Upper class/Upper –middle class |
|--------|----------------|--------------------------------|
| Unit 1 | Lesson 5 (p. 7) | Upper class/Upper –middle class |
| Unit 1 | Lesson 6 (p. 9) | Upper class/Upper –middle class |
| Unit 1 | Lesson 9 (p. 15) | Upper class/Upper –middle class |
| Unit 2 | Lesson 1 (p. 19) | Middle Class |
| Unit 2 Lesson 4 (p. 22) | Upper class and Middle class |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Unit 3 (p. 26)         | Middle/Lower middle class     |
| Unit 3 (p. 26)         | Middle class                  |
| Unit 3 Lesson 3 (p. 27)| Middle class/Lower-middle class |
| Unit 3 Lesson 3 (p. 27)| Upper class/Middle class      |
| Unit 3 Lesson 4 (p. 32)| Upper class and Lower-middle class |
| Unit 3 Lesson 7 (p. 38) | Middle class |
|------------------------|--------------|
| Unit 5 (p. 52)         | Middle class/Lower-middle class |
| Unit 5 Lesson 3 (p. 56)| Middle class |
| Unit 7 Lesson 1 (p. 77)| Upper class |
| Unit 7 Lesson 3 (p. 80)| Lower class |
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| Unit 7 | Lesson 4 | Lower class |
|--------|----------|-------------|
|        |          |             |

| Unit 8 | Lesson 1 | Upper class/Middle class |
|--------|----------|--------------------------|
|        |          |                          |

| Unit 8 | Lesson 1 | Upper class/Middle class |
|--------|----------|--------------------------|
|        |          |                          |

| Unit 8 | Lesson 2 | Upper class/Middle class |
|--------|----------|--------------------------|
|        |          |                          |

| Unit 8 | Lesson 5 | Lower class |
|--------|----------|-------------|
|        |          |             |
| Unit 9          | Upper class and Middle class |
|----------------|-----------------------------|
| Lesson 4       |                             |
| (p. 113)       |                             |