English Language Education in Transition: A Comparative Analysis of Old and New English NCERT Textbooks of 6th Class

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Abstract

English language education has been subjected to tremendous changes in Indian classrooms due to various factors such as social changes, policy reforms and pedagogical shifts. The present article undertakes a comparative analysis of the older and newer versions of English NCERT textbooks of class sixth, i.e., Honeysuckle and Poorvi, using Alan Cunningsworth's evaluative framework as a lens. The comparative analysis revealed that the older textbooks leaned heavily on rote learning, traditional literary exposure, and teacher-centered instruction while the newer editions exhibit a deliberate move towards communicative competence, inclusivity, and learner autonomy.

1. Introduction

The landscape of English language education in India has undergone significant transformation in recent decades, reflecting shifts in pedagogical priorities, sociocultural dynamics, and curriculum reforms. Among the most influential instruments of this change are school textbooks, particularly those prescribed by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT). These textbooks embody the official vision of language education and play a decisive role in shaping learners' linguistic and cognitive development. As educational goals evolve from rote learning to communicative competence and critical thinking, evaluating whether the teaching materials align with these changing demands is imperative. The present article undertakes a comparative analysis of the older and newer versions of English NCERT textbooks of class sixth, i.e., Honeysuckle and Poorvi, using Alan Cunningsworth's evaluative framework as a lens.

English language education in India has witnessed a profound transformation over the past few decades, shaped by global communication needs, policy shifts, and pedagogical reform. The English language, once introduced as a colonial tool, has gradually evolved into a critical medium for academic success, professional mobility, and global citizenship. In this changing educational environment, textbooks remain one of the most influential tools for delivering curriculum content. Among these, NCERT (National Council of Educational Research and Training) English textbooks hold a position of national importance, being widely adopted in schools across India under the CBSE (Central Board of Secondary Education) framework.

The study focused on two English textbooks, consisting of one used in the past and one used in the present by sixth-grade students in CBSE schools, both of which were claimed to align with the NCERT guidelines. The first textbook is **Honeysuckle**. *Honeysuckle* is an English textbook designed for Class 6

students and published by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), India. It comprises 10 prose chapters and 8 poems. The NCERT Class 6 English textbook titled *Honeysuckle* was first published in 2006. It consists of 138 pages.The second textbook is **Poorvi.** It is published by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), India and is aligned with: National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCF-SE) 2023. The first edition of this textbook was released in June 2024. Poorvi is operative now in English classrooms of CBSE schools from the academic year 2025 onwards. It consists of 164 pages.

As the goals of English language education transition from traditional grammar-translation methods to more communicative, learner-centred approaches, it becomes necessary to reassess the relevance, quality, and effectiveness of the textbooks in use. Textbooks are not mere compilations of reading passages and grammar exercises; they reflect the pedagogical philosophies of their time, embody curriculum standards, and directly affect the learning experiences of millions of students. Hence, the evolution of NCERT textbooks from their older versions to the current editions offers a valuable opportunity to explore how educational values, language priorities, and instructional strategies have changed over time.

In doing so, the research contributes not only to textbook evaluation literature but also to broader discussions on curriculum reform, quality of educational materials, and the future direction of English language education in India. Through a critical, theory-based examination of two generations of NCERT textbooks, this research paper seeks to highlight the strengths and limitations of each, offering insights for educators, policymakers, and curriculum developers committed to enhancing English education in a multilingual, rapidly modernising society.

2. Review of Related Literature

The role of English language education in shaping learners for the demands of the 21st century has been widely recognised in both global and Indian educational discourse. Studiesemphasise that language instruction must go beyond grammar and vocabulary to foster critical skills such as problem-solving, collaboration, and cultural literacy (Trilling & Fadel, 2009). Within the Indian context, this shift has gained renewed attention following the implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which calls for pedagogical transformation across all subject areas, including English (Ministry of Education, 2020). A study highlights that textbooks are central to the enactment of curriculum goals in Indian classrooms, particularly in government and public schools where teacher autonomy may be limited (Kumar, 2005). As instructional tools, textbooks not only provide linguistic content but also shape pedagogical practices and student engagement (Mukundan & Nimehchisalem, 2008). Therefore, the evaluation of textbooks becomes essential in assessing how effectively they align with contemporary educational aims.

Cunningsworth's (1995) framework remains one of the most widely used models for textbook evaluation. It offers a detailed set of parameters—including aims and objectives, content relevance, methodology, language skills integration, and teacher support—which allow for a comprehensive assessment of instructional materials. According to Cunningsworth, textbooks should not only reflect linguistic accuracy but also support learners' communicative needs and cultural context.

Several recent studies have examined the alignment of Indian English textbooks with the principles of communicative language teaching (CLT). For instance, Kalia and Yadav (2019) argue that while many NCERT textbooks attempt to introduce CLT elements, they often fall short in promoting interactive or

student-centred activities. Similarly, Sharma (2021) noted that listening and speaking components remain underdeveloped in many language textbooks, limiting students' oral proficiency and real-world application of language.

The NEP 2020 and the National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCFSE) 2023 further emphasise the integration of values, local knowledge, and experiential learning into subject content. In this context, newly developed textbooks like *Poorvi* aim to incorporate these ideals by using culturally grounded narratives, interdisciplinary themes, and contextual grammar. However, the practical implementation of these objectives through textbook design remains an area requiring closer scrutiny.

Comparative analyses of English textbooks have also pointed out inconsistencies in the development of core language skills. While some textbooks excel in reading and writing, they may neglect listening and speaking, thereby failing to support holistic language learning (Banegas, 2011). Furthermore, teacher support materials, which are crucial in large or under-resourced classrooms, are often minimal or absent, placing additional pressure on educators to bridge pedagogical gaps (Sharma & Gupta, 2020).

In light of these concerns, this study seeks to contribute to the growing body of research by evaluating *Honeysuckle* and *Poorvi*, two Class 6 English textbooks published by NCERT, through the lens of Cunningsworth's evaluative framework. This approach enables a systematic understanding of how well these resources support the development of 21st-century skills, as envisioned in recent national educational reforms. *Poorvi,* which is the new English NCERT textbook, replaced *Honeysuckle,* which is the old NCERT textbook.

3. Rationale for Using Cunningsworth's Framework for Evaluating ELT Textbooks

Alan Cunningsworth, in his renowned work "Choosing Your Coursebook" (1995), introduced a comprehensive framework for evaluating English Language Teaching (ELT) textbooks. Cunningsworth, in his seminal work *Choosing Your Coursebook* (1995), outlines a comprehensive set of criteria for assessing English language textbooks, with a strong emphasis on learner needs, curricular fit, balance of skills, cultural relevance, and methodological soundness. According to Cunningsworth, an effective textbook must not only support language acquisition but also meet diverse learner needs, align with educational goals, and encourage meaningful real-world language use. Applying this theory to the Indian context allows for a systematic and objective examination of how effectively the current teaching-learning materials support the goals of modern English education, and to what extent they have improved upon or diverged from their predecessors. By applying Cunningsworth's theory to a comparative analysis of the old and new NCERT English textbooks, this research aims to investigate whether recent editions offer meaningful pedagogical improvements, better reflect the communicative goals of language learning, and cater more effectively to the diverse needs of Indian learners. The study also examines whether these textbooks successfully balance the roles of promoting language proficiency, cultural sensitivity, and critical thinking.

Cunningsworth's evaluation model outlines eight critical factors that educators should consider when selecting or reviewing ELT materials. First, "Aims and Approaches" asks whether the book matches curriculum goals, addresses learner needs, and aligns with the educator's philosophy. Second, "Design and Organization" focus on how logically and coherently the content is structured, ensuring it promotes a smooth learning progression. Third, "Language Content" assesses the extent to which grammar, vocabulary, and functional language are covered. Fourth, "Skills" examines whether listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills are all given balanced attention. Fifth, "Topic" considers whether the topics

are culturally appropriate, interesting, and relatable for the learners. Sixth, "Methodology" looks into the pedagogical strategies the textbook promotes, such as whether it supports a learner-centred classroom. Seventh, "Teacher's Book" evaluates the availability of supplementary materials like guides, answer keys, and extension activities. Finally, "Practical Consideration" reviews the textbook's adaptability, affordability, and ease of use across various teaching environments. Cunningsworth identifies eight key factors to consider when evaluating ELT materials:

Reviewing Factors	Explanation
Aims & Approaches	Does the textbook align with curriculum objectives, learner needs, and teaching philosophy?
Design & Organization	How is the content structured, and does it provide a logical flow?
Language Content	How thoroughly does the book cover grammar, vocabulary, and practical language functions?
Skills	Does the textbook include a balanced focus on the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing)?
Topic	Are the themes relevant, interesting, and culturally appropriate for the learners?
Methodology	What teaching strategies does the book promote? Is it learner-centred?
Teacher's Book	Does the textbook offer useful supplementary resources, like guides and answers?
Practical Consideration	Is the book practical in terms of cost, accessibility, and adaptability for different teaching environments?

4. Core Principles of Cunningsworth's Evaluation Approach

Several key ideas underpin Cunningsworth's method of textbook evaluation. Foremost are a learner-centred focus, stressing that materials should address the learners' specific abilities, backgrounds, and learning goals. Equally important is balanced skill integration, ensuring that all four core language skills are developed with a focus on both fluency and accuracy. Cultural sensitivity is another pillar; textbooks should respect learners' cultural contexts, fostering inclusion and relatability. In addition, Cunningsworth values teacher flexibility, advocating for materials that allow teachers to adapt and modify lessons to fit the classroom dynamics. He also stresses the importance of supplementary resources, encouraging a view of textbooks as flexible guides rather than rigid blueprints.

4.1.1 Practical Application of the Framework

In practice, when applying Cunningsworth's framework to textbooks like *Honeysuckle* or *Poorvi*, we reflect on a series of guiding questions. We consider whether the book's objectives align with curriculum expectations and whether it promotes the intended learning outcomes. Also, there is assessment of the integration of all four language skills and evaluate the relevance and sensitivity of the chosen topics. We also examine whether the textbook fosters higher-order thinking, creativity, and opportunities for student self-expression. These reflective questions ensure that the textbook is not just educational but also engaging and empowering for learners. It provides a detailed, organised way of systematically evaluating any ELT textbook. Moreover, the framework's versatility allows it to be applied across

different educational levels and types of English learning contexts, from primary classrooms to adult education programs.

4. Research Methodology

In carrying out this study, the researcher adopted content analysis as a qualitative research method. The reason is mainly to analyze the content, including texts, images, and audio. Through this method, the researchers were able to identify recurring themes, patterns, and meanings within data. The data for this study were gathered through a close examination of two English textbooks. This process involved analysing written elements such as the learning objectives, activities, tasks, and dialogues featured in each book.

The researchers also applied Cunningsworth's checklist, which assesses textbooks across eight categories: aims and approaches, design and organization, language content, skills, topics, methodology, teacher support materials, and practical considerations. This step involved reviewing the two textbooks against this checklist to assess their suitability. Researcher employed **deductive coding** as the aim of the study is to interpret and compare the pedagogical quality and structure of the textbooks based on Cunningsworth's reviewing criteria, which involves understanding themes, instructional approaches, skill balance, and learner relevance, rather than just counting items.

The researchers drew conclusions regarding how well the two textbooks met Cunningsworth's standards. This stage involved identifying each textbook's strengths and weaknesses. Cunningsworth's framework (1995) served as the primary basis for this evaluation, with each criterion broken down into specific subcategories that the textbooks needed to meet. To analyze aims and approaches, the researcher compared the textbooks' learning objectives with the relevant basic competencies and assessed their alignment. The evaluation of approaches focused on examining the activities within the books to determine whether they supported both teacher and student needs. For design and organization, the analysis considered elements such as the course package structure, how content was sequenced and graded, the use of recycling and revision, reference sections for grammar, and overall layout and presentation—all as reflected in the textbooks' contents. When assessing language content, the researcher looked at the suitability of core grammar coverage, vocabulary development, language structure and conventions, style, and overall appropriateness—all integral to the textbooks' material. Skills were analyzed by examining activities related to the four primary language skills: reading, listening, speaking, and writing. The topics within the textbooks were evaluated based on variety, appeal, representation of social and cultural contexts, and inclusivity regarding different groups and communities. These aspects were often highlighted at the start of each chapter or embedded within activities and visuals throughout the book. Methodology was assessed by reviewing the approaches used to present new language, techniques for encouraging active learning, and strategies for developing communicative competence among students. The teacher's book was analyzed separately, focusing on the support it provided, including supplementary materials, teaching techniques, theoretical grounding, and availability of answer keys. Finally, practical considerations were evaluated, taking into account the cost of the complete textbook package, visual presentation, and any special equipment required for classroom use.

5. Comparison of Honeysuckle and Poorvi using the checklist by Cunningsworth

To ensure a systematic and objective evaluation, this comparison of two textbooks uses Cunningsworth

's checklist, which assesses textbooks based on criteria such as aims and approaches, design and organization, language content, skills, topic relevance, and teacher and learner support. By applying this framework, the analysis seeks to uncover the pedagogical strengths and limitations of each text, offering insight into their effectiveness in supporting student learning in varied educational contexts.

5.1 Aims and Approaches

When comparing *Poorvi*, the new NCERT textbook, with *Honeysuckle*, the older version, several distinctions emerge regarding their suitability for today's classrooms. *Poorvi* aligns well with the current teaching programme and the goals of the National Education Policy 2020, offering a learner-centric approach that emphasises experiential and inclusive learning, making it highly suitable for modern pedagogical needs. In contrast, *Honeysuckle* reflects the objectives of the older NCF 2005, and while it supports reading and basic literacy, it falls short of addressing newer priorities like multilingualism, emotional development, and interactive learning, thus making it only partially suitable. *Poorvi* also proves to be more appropriate for contemporary learning environments, incorporating flexible and diverse teaching strategies that accommodate a range of student needs. *Honeysuckle*, although useful in more traditional contexts, offers limited adaptability. From a content perspective, *Poorvi* stands out as a comprehensive resource by integrating grammar, vocabulary, life skills, and cross-curricular themes within the main text, while *Honeysuckle* tends to separate these elements, reducing its cohesiveness. Finally, in terms of accommodating different teaching and learning styles, *Poorvi* allows for a wide range of activities and learning modes, supporting engagement across multiple intelligences, whereas *Honeysuckle* remains text-heavy and rigid in structure, offering minimal scope for differentiation, making it less suitable by current standards.

5.2 Design and Organization

In terms of design and organization, *Poorvi* offers a more comprehensive and updated course package, including not just the student book but also integrated suggestions for audio-visual materials and teacher support—making it suitable. *Honeysuckle*, on the other hand, primarily focuses on the student textbook with limited supporting resources, so it is partially suitable in this regard. When it comes to content organization, *Poorvi* follows a well-structured thematic and functional approach that supports skills, values, and real-world connections, making the flow both intuitive and pedagogically sound. *Honeysuckle* arranges content more traditionally, by genre and skill, which can feel disjointed at times, thus it is partially suitable. For both learners and teachers, *Poorvi*'s user-friendly structure and integration of tasks, reflection, and learner agency make it highly suitable, whereas *Honeysuckle* can feel rigid and dated in terms of classroom adaptability, so it is partially suitable. Regarding content sequencing, *Poorvi* shows a clear progression in complexity and builds gradually on prior knowledge, making it suitable, while *Honeysuckle* lacks that smooth scaffolding and jumps between difficulty levels, rendering it partially suitable. In terms of grading and progression, *Poorvi* clearly aligns with NEP 2020 expectations and learner outcomes, whereas *Honeysuckle* is partially suitable, reflecting older benchmarks that may no longer be sufficient. Recycling and revision are thoughtfully embedded in *Poorvi*, with reflection tasks and self-checks; in contrast, *Honeysuckle* does not emphasize reinforcement enough, so it is not suitable for that aspect. When it comes to grammar/reference for self-study, *Poorvi* weaves in grammar points within context and offers opportunities for learners to explore them independently, while *Honeysuckle* treats grammar as a separate component with little learner agency, making it partially suitable. Finally, *Poorvi* has a clean, visually balanced, and inviting layout with consistent formatting, icons, and cues for interaction, making it highly suitable, whereas *Honeysuckle*

looks more traditional and text-heavy, and may not appeal to visual or young learners—partially suitable.

5.3 Language Content

When it comes to language content, *Poorvi* shows a strong alignment with current pedagogical goals and learner needs. It includes key grammar items that are appropriate to the learners' level, introduced contextually and reinforced through meaningful activities, this makes it suitable. *Honeysuckle*, while covering most essential grammar points, presents them in a more traditional and isolated manner, lacking integration with real communication, which makes it partially suitable. In terms of vocabulary, *Poorvi* offers a broader and more purposeful selection, encouraging development through themes, visual cues, and context-based learning strategies. Some studies have shown that the vocabulary used in Poorvi is difficult as per the learning level of class sixth. *Honeysuckle*, however, provides limited exposure to vocabulary, with fewer opportunities for expansion or varied usage. Pronunciation is an area where *Poorvi* takes a clear lead by embedding listening and speaking tasks that emphasize sounds, stress, and rhythm making it suitable while *Honeysuckle* barely touches upon pronunciation, offering minimal explicit focus, so it is not suitable in this regard. For supporting learners in mastering the structure and conventions of both spoken and written English, *Poorvi* incorporates models, guided tasks, and examples that scaffold learning effectively. *Honeysuckle* does include some exposure to writing formats and dialogue, but the lack of consistency and learner support renders it only partially suitable. Lastly, regarding style and appropriacy, *Poorvi* is clearly attuned to contemporary, inclusive, and socially relevant language, making it suitable, while *Honeysuckle* sometimes uses outdated or overly formal expressions, making its content partially suitable in this domain.

5.4 Skills

In evaluating the skills component, *Poorvi* stands out for its holistic and well-balanced treatment of all four language skills i.e., listening, speaking, reading, and writing making it suitable. It integrates these skills seamlessly through thematically connected tasks, encouraging students to engage with language meaningfully. In contrast, *Honeysuckle* places a stronger emphasis on reading and writing, with limited structured speaking or listening opportunities, making it partially suitable overall. When it comes to integrated skill development, *Poorvi* again shows strength with tasks that blend listening with speaking or reading with writing, reflecting communicative classroom practices. *Honeysuckle* does feature some integration, but this occurs infrequently and without much scaffolding. Regarding reading material, both textbooks offer texts that are appropriate in terms of complexity and age level, but *Poorvi* includes a wider variety of genres and connects reading with engaging follow-up tasks, while *Honeysuckle*, although featuring quality prose and poetry, tends to lack varied response activities. In the area of listening, *Poorvi* includes authentic, clear audio resources aimed at building comprehensionwhereas *Honeysuckle* does not provide consistent or structured listening support, rendering it not suitable. For spoken English, *Poorvi* uses dialogues, pair work, and roleplay that mirror real-life interactions, making it suitable, while *Honeysuckle* rarely includes such components, so it is not suitable. Lastly, in writing instruction, *Poorvi* supports learners with guided activities, modelling, and attention to structure and purpose, while *Honeysuckle* offers writing tasks but lacks explicit instruction or scaffolding, making it partially suitable.

5.5 Topic

When comparing the thematic content of Honeysuckle and Poorvi, Poorvi takes a more modern, inclusive, and learner-centered approach, making it generally suitable across most parameters. The

topics in *Poorvi* are varied and genuinely engaging, often rooted in real-life situations, environmental concerns, and social values, making them suitable for capturing students' interest. In contrast, *Honeysuckle* includes traditional stories and moral tales that are valuable and connect with the contemporary experiences of learners, making it suitable in this regard. In terms of enriching learners' world knowledge and offering meaningful experiences, *Poorvi* integrates cross-cultural and interdisciplinary themessuch as climate awareness, gender sensitivity, and digital literacywhich broaden learners' perspectives and are thus suitable. *Honeysuckle*, though informative, tends to remain within more conventional boundaries, limiting the scope for wider learning, hence it is partially suitable. Both textbooks present topics that are age-appropriate and linguistically aligned with learners' cognitive levels, but *Poorvi's* layered scaffolding and language support make it suitable, while *Honeysuckle* is partially suitable, as some texts may appear linguistically dense without sufficient pre-reading or post-reading support. *Poorvi* excels in social and cultural relevance, including current societal issues and representations from varied Indian contexts. *Honeysuckle*, while reflecting Indian values, does so in a more generic and sometimes outdated manner. In terms of gender representation, *Poorvi* maintains a balanced portrayal of both genders in narratives and illustrations while *Honeysuckle* occasionally leans toward traditional roles and lacks consistent representation, making it partially suitable. Finally, *Poorvi* gives visibility to diverse groups, including different regions, communities, and abilities, offering fair and inclusive representation whereas *Honeysuckle* offers limited diversity, with less deliberate inclusion, making it not suitable in today's inclusivity standards. Poorvi stands out for its strong foundation in Indian ethos and cultural narratives, far more prominently than Honeysuckle. While Honeysuckle features a mix of global and traditional tales, Poorvi consciously roots a larger portion of its chapters in indigenous contexts, folk traditions, and everyday Indian life. This shift is aligned with the vision of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which emphasizes the importance of incorporating the Indigenous Knowledge System (IKS) into mainstream education. From regional storytelling to lessons that reflect local wisdom, Poorvi not only introduces learners to rich cultural values but also fosters a sense of belonging and identity through relatable, Indian-centered content. This makes it a more culturally responsive resource in today's evolving curriculum landscape.

5.6 Classroom Methodology

When comparing *Honeysuckle* with *Poorvi*in context of classroom methodology there are clear differences in how each supports teaching and learning. Honeysuckle can be considered partially suitable as it follows a traditional, textbook-driven structure that many teachers may be comfortable with, but it lacks flexibility in its teaching methods. Lessons are mostly centered around reading and comprehension, with limited opportunities for students to participate actively or apply the language in real-life contexts. The language skills are not integrated well; reading dominates, while speaking and listening get very little attention. Although there are grammar and vocabulary tasks, they are often mechanical and disconnected from actual communication. The book also does not offer much support for building study skills or encouraging students to reflect on how they learn. Most tasks are teacher-led, with little encouragement for learners to take charge of their own progress.

In contrast, Poorvi is clearly suitable for today's classrooms. It introduces a more modern, interactive approach to language learning. The activities are designed to involve students activelythrough discussions, creative writing, role-play, and group workwhich helps build confidence and communication skills. All four language skills are addressed more evenly, and the exercises often encourage learners to use English in meaningful ways. Importantly, *Poorvi* also helps students become

more independent learners by including self-assessment tasks, prompts for reflection, and suggestions on how to study better. The focus is not just on learning content but also on developing habits that support lifelong learning.

To sum up, while *Honeysuckle* has strengths in providing a structured foundation, it does not fully meet the needs of a communicative or learner-centered classroom. *Poorvi*, on the other hand, moves in the right direction by promoting interaction, critical thinking, and learner autonomy, making it more relevant and effective for current teaching environments.

5.7 Teacher's Book

When evaluating the Teacher's Books accompanying *Honeysuckle* and *Poorvi*, distinct differences emerge in terms of support, clarity, and pedagogical value. The Teacher's Book for *Honeysuckle* can be labelled as partially suitable. While it does offer some basic guidance on lesson delivery and includes answer keys, the support is minimal and often lacks depth. Explanations of grammar points are brief and do not always help the teacher connect language forms with real-life usage. Cultural references are either glossed over or presented without much context, which can make it difficult for educators to expand discussions meaningfully. Additionally, the Teacher's Book rarely justifies why certain materials or texts were chosen, leaving the instructional approach largely unexplained. It assumes a one-size-fits-all classroom and offers little flexibility for varied learning needs.

In contrast, the Teacher's Book for *Poorvi* is Suitable and far more comprehensive. It not only includes answer keys but also provides clear rationale behind the selection of texts and activities. The methods used in the book are thoroughly explained, with notes that help teachers understand the purpose of each task and how to adapt it to different classroom situations. Grammar is introduced contextually and is tied closely to communicative use, making it easier for teachers to explain to students. Cultural aspects are better integrated and explained, helping educators create more inclusive and globally aware discussions. Most importantly, *Poorvi*'s Teacher's Book empowers teachers by giving them a solid understanding of both what to teach and how to teach it, which supports more thoughtful and effective instruction.

5.8 Practical Consideration

When it comes to practical considerations, *Honeysuckle* (old NCERT English textbook) can be classified as partially suitable. Being a government-issued book, its cost is minimal or free in most public school settings, which makes it highly accessible. However, the design and physical durability of the book often fall short. The paper quality is average, the layout is dated, and the illustrations are limited and not particularly engaging for students. Although the book is widely distributed and easy to obtain, it does not come with many supplementary materials or options to order extras like activity books or audio support. No special equipment is required to use it, which works well in under-resourced schools, but it also means there is little integration of modern tools like audio-visual content or interactive digital resources.

In contrast, *Poorvi* is Suitable from a practical standpoint. It maintains NCERT's policy of affordability while improving significantly in design, layout, and overall presentation. The illustrations are vibrant, the formatting is cleaner, and the materials are printed on better-quality paper, which enhances their durability. The textbook is also readily available, with supplementary components such as audio support, teacher resources, and project materials accessible through digital platforms. While some digital features may require internet access or basic audio equipment, these are increasingly available in many classrooms today and are well worth the added value. *Poorvi* balances cost, accessibility, and modern teaching needs effectively, making it a practical choice for a wide range of school environments.

5.9 The Appropriateness of Two Textbooks Based on Cunningsworth's Theory

The results of this study are presented through tables that analyse the data according to the eight criteria of Cunningsworth's theory. The findings are derived from the researchers' detailed analysis and further supported by expert judgment, validating the study's conclusions. The two textbooks examined are *Honeysuckle* and *Poorvi*. Table 1 provides an assessment of the relevance and suitability of these two textbooks, based on the framework established by Cunningsworth's theory. The researcher adopted the checklist given by Cunningsworth in the book.

Table 1: Analysis of Two Textbooks based on Cunningsworth's Theory

Criteria	Honeysuckle	Poorvi
Aims and Approaches	Partly suitable	Suitable
Design and Organization	Partly Suitable	Suitable
Language Content	Partly Suitable	Suitable
Skills	Partly Suitable	Suitable
Topic	Suitable	Suitable
Methodology	Partly Suitable	Suitable
Teachers' Book	Partly Suitable	Suitable
Practical Consideration	Suitable	Suitable

Table 1 reveald that both texts cater to the same academic level, the evaluation reveals meaningful differences in their pedagogical design and effectiveness. From the academic year 2025-2026, Poorvi has replaced Honeysuckle in CBSE Schools in India. In terms of aims and teaching approach, *Poorvi* demonstrates a clearer connection with the guiding principles of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and the National Curriculum Framework of School Education (NCFSE) 2023. It's structure promotes communication, creative thinking, and cultural awareness, making it more compatible with contemporary educational goals. *Honeysuckle*, while grounded in sound educational intentions, only partially meets these criteria, as its learner outcomes and instructional strategies lack consistent alignment with modern, student-centered practices. The overall layout and organization of *Poorvi* show a well-thought-out thematic progression, enabling learners to absorb vocabulary and grammar through relevant contexts. *Honeysuckle* maintains a logical structure but tends to rely on more conventional formats that restrict opportunities for integrated language use across listening, speaking, reading, and writing. From a linguistic standpoint, *Poorvi* is rated positively for embedding grammar and new vocabulary in authentic, real-life situations. This supports practical language acquisition. In contrast, *Honeysuckle* leans more heavily toward literary and academic language use, occasionally detaching grammar instruction from practical application, thus receiving only a partial suitability rating. Notably, *Honeysuckle* performs better in enhancing reading and writing skills. It receives a "suitable" rating in this area due to its structured literacy tasks. *Poorvi*, however, falls short in addressing oral communication skills. The absence of audio content and limited focus on speaking tasks undermine its effectiveness in offering a balanced language skill set. Both textbooks score well in terms of topical relevance. They include narratives that reflect everyday life, social values, and culturally significant themes, closely matching Cunningsworth's expectation that learning materials should mirror learners' environments and experiences. Despite these strengths, the methodology employed in both textbooks remains somewhat questionable. There is a noticeable reliance on teacher-led exercises and passive

comprehension questions. Neither book makes substantial use of communicative tasks, project-based work, or learner autonomy, which are foundational in modern language education. As a result, both are marked as "partly suitable" under the methodology criterion. Support for teachers is another shared weakness. The lack of robust teaching guides, assessment frameworks, and digital resources limits the textbooks' usability, especially in under-resourced or varied classroom settings. Hence, each is again rated as only "partly suitable" in this area. In practical terms, both textbooks are affordable, widely available, and generally manageable in large classroom environments. This earns them a **"suitable"** rating for accessibility and usability in the Indian educational context.

In summary, *Poorvi* emerges as more forward-thinking in its curriculum alignment, contextual integration of language, and content organization. *Honeysuckle* excels somewhat in literacy development but lags in practical grammar application and interactive pedagogy. For both books, significant improvements are needed in speaking-listening integration, teacher support tools, and the incorporation of student-centered learning methodologies.

6. Conclusion

The comparative analysis of the old and new English NCERT textbooks through the lens of Cunningsworth's theory reveals a significant shift in pedagogical priorities and educational intent. While the older textbooks leaned heavily on rote learning, traditional literary exposure, and teacher-centered instruction, the newer editions exhibit a deliberate move towards communicative competence, inclusivity, and learner autonomy. The integration of real-life contexts, updated cultural references, and diverse literary voices marks a progressive step in aligning textbook content with contemporary educational goals.

However, despite these advancements, the analysis also highlights certain gaps, such as the uneven balance between skills development and the occasional lack of depth in critical thinking tasks. Cunningsworth's evaluative criteria emphasize the need for textbooks to be both adaptable and context-sensitive, and while the new NCERT textbooks show notable improvement, there remains room for refinement, especially in fostering interdisciplinary connections and deeper engagement with socio-cultural issues. Ultimately, this transition reflects not just a change in textbooks but a broader evolution in the philosophy of English education in India. To ensure continued progress, future textbook revisions must maintain a dialogue between policy, pedagogy, and learner needs, guided by both theory and classroom realities.

The evolution of English textbooks under the NCERT framework, when examined through Cunningsworth's evaluative model, reveals a dynamic transition in the philosophy and practice of English education in India. This comparative study between the older and newer NCERT English textbooks underscores a conscious pedagogical shift from traditional, text-heavy, grammar-centric instruction to a more learner-centered, communicative, and holistic approach to language learning. The older textbooks, while rich in classical literature and canonical texts, often promoted passive learning, with limited emphasis on real-life language use, learner autonomy, or interactive skill-building. Their design tended to favour teacher control over classroom discourse and prioritized linguistic accuracy over meaningful communication. In contrast, the new textbooks exhibit a more balanced integration of the four language skills listening, speaking, reading, and writing, while also incorporating contemporary themes, inclusive narratives, and multimodal content to better engage students from diverse backgrounds.

Cunningsworth's theory, which highlights the importance of relevance, learner needs, skills balance, and flexibility in material design, provides a valuable framework for assessing these changes. The new textbooks align more closely with these criteria, especially in their use of varied text types, contextualized grammar practice, and tasks that encourage critical thinking, collaboration, and reflection. Additionally, they reflect a broader socio-political shift towards inclusivity, gender sensitivity, and democratic values in education.However, despite these commendable improvements, the analysis also points to areas that need further development. For instance, while the new textbooks aim for communicative competence, some exercises lack the depth and scaffolding necessary to truly empower students with functional, real-world language use. Furthermore, the integration of digital literacy and interdisciplinary contentessential in today's globalized and digital ageremains limited and uneven.

In conclusion, the transformation of NCERT English textbooks is indicative of a broader reimagining of English education in India, one that attempts to reconcile global pedagogical trends with local classroom realities. While the newer materials mark a significant stride towards a more equitable and effective language learning experience, sustained efforts in curriculum design, teacher training, and resource development are essential to fully realize the potential envisioned in educational reforms. The journey from transmission to transformation in English education is ongoing, and textbooks, as both mirrors and instruments of policy, must continue to evolve in tandem with the linguistic, cultural, and cognitive needs of 21st-century learners.

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