

ADAPTATION OF ELT FOR ONLINE EDUCATION IN  
PRIMARY SCHOOLS OF BANGLADESH  
DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

By

Maliha Khan

18203023

A thesis submitted to the faculty of BRAC University in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in English

Department of English and Humanities

Brac University

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## **Declaration**

It is hereby declared that

1. The thesis submitted is my own original work while completing degree at Brac University.
2. The thesis does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.
3. The thesis does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
4. I have acknowledged all main sources of help.

Name: Maliha Khan

ID: 18203023

## **Approval**

The thesis titled “Adaptation of ELT for Online Education in Primary Schools of Bangladesh during COVID-19 Pandemic” submitted by Maliha Khan (18203023) of Spring, 2021 has been accepted as satisfactory in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in English on 29<sup>th</sup> May, 2021.

### **Examining Committee:**

Supervisor:  
(Member)

---

Asifa Sultana, PhD  
Associate Professor, Department of English and Humanities  
Brac University

Examiner:  
(Member)

---

Md Al Amin, PhD  
Assistant Professor, Department of English and Humanities  
Brac University

Departmental Head:  
(Chair)

---

Firdous Azim, PhD  
Chairperson, Department of English and Humanities  
Brac University

## ABSTRACT

This research paper observes and analyses the changes adapted to English Language Teaching made to accommodate online learning. Online education has been effective in Bangladesh since March, 2020 due to COVID-19 pandemic closing down schools for an indefinite period. While several studies have explored the effects of such a sudden shift in learning environment for secondary and tertiary level students, the primary level students have not received as much attention. As a remedy to cover the research gap, this research was conducted in a qualitative and in-depth measure, selecting a pool of teachers, students and parents for data. The students are from different educational backgrounds, namely English Medium, Bengali Medium and English Version. The purpose behind this research is fueled by the absolute necessity of having an aptitude for English skills in our context. Primary students need care and attention to build a strong skill foundation, as they will advance to secondary and tertiary levels henceforth. The paper not only observes, but also explores if the changes adapted are effective enough to continue online education the way it has been in the past year. Through interviews and surveys, and relevant secondary sources, the gathered data answers the question of whether it is time to bring about reform in teaching methods, policies, and assessments.

*Keywords:* Online education in Bangladesh; primary students; COVID-19; pandemic education; English Language Teaching

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Context

Bangladesh went into the first lockdown due to the novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in March, 2020, putting a sudden and indefinite halt to all in-person educational processes until directives for safely resuming classes could be given. The lockdown has been lifted and temporarily enforced a few times since then, with many public businesses and official centers choosing to stay reopened. However, schools remain closed for the safety of young children. Among the students taking classes online are children as young as 3 years old with the help of smart devices. English being one of the mandatory subjects at schools in Bangladesh, the language is being taught online as learning to use it is more necessary than ever.

### 1.2 Problem Statement

It is not easy to imagine children focusing on studies via smartphones or computers as they do in classrooms with distractions present all around their home. In some cases, parents sit in with the students during their classes or observe. This may interfere further with their concentration. Despite the obstacles and issues getting in the way, teachers all over the country are striving to provide quality education in these trying times so that students do not fall behind. Due to having significance in terms of global communications, higher study opportunities and day to day interactions, the English language must be taught as per usual standard. Although it may be difficult with the

student body quite young, it is important to continue building the basics of the language strongly as it would be in a normal classroom. Therefore, this paper aims to study the adjustments that have been made to accommodate those learning the foundation of English from their homes. Based on input from teachers who have adapted a completely “offline” course/subject to an online one, the techniques and changes applied to English language teaching for primary level students will be observed and analyzed.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

- 1: What changes have been made to curriculum and teaching methods in regards to inciting participation, attention, motivation and so on?
- 2: What changes have been made to evaluation patterns? Is the grading system, mark distribution and question pattern or difficulty level of assessments affected?
- 3: What are some of the implications of learning English online? Will they have difficulty returning to traditional learning if schools are opened?

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Research Gap**

There was an apparent research gap here, in that most studies dedicated resources into researching the impact of online learning/teaching for higher education and the number of articles addressing primary education was alarmingly small. This made it even more vital to investigate the effects on primary level learners, as an effective education at this point is crucial in moving forward in reaching higher education level. Especially considering the need for being apt in English language skills with communication shifting largely to online platforms, and with academic and professional opportunities emerging, this language must be taught with utmost care at this time.

#### **2.2 Introduction of E-Learning in Bangladesh**

E-learning is said to be first introduced in Bangladesh in 1956 via a radio-broadcasting program, later expanded by Bangladesh's first university to implement online learning, BOU (Bangladesh Open University) in 1992 (Islam & Selim, 2006). Teachers at BOU received training in information technology, mass communication, computer skill development etc. to overcome the obstacles of teaching with technology. Common problems of e-learning mentioned were unreliable technology, difficulty of the user interface, lack of keyboard literacy, and lack of internet connections. However, students nowadays are more familiar with technology and smartphones with WiFi connections that allow students to easily search and view materials online. Even primary

level students from middle to upper middle class families have had access to their parents' smart devices or are owners of smartphones and tablets themselves. The challenge remains in making learning interactive and granting students the opportunity to demonstrate their skills.

### **2.3 Challenges of ELT policies in school before and during pandemic**

Rahman et al. (2019) discussed the challenges of teaching English as a second language in a nation born of its dedication to the mother tongue. They stressed the significance of teacher education, teaching methods and strategies, effective teaching materials, and implementation of assessment reform as factors to be reinforced in switching from GTM (Grammar Translation Method) to CLT (Communicative Language Teaching) that was decided by the Ministry of Education in the 1950s. Even if the teacher was equipped with qualification and training of implementing CLT, often their needs were overlooked in the “top-down process in the context of Bangladesh.” This means that teachers seldom had the chance to use their opinion and instinct in guiding students within the strictly set school policies. A consequence of Bangladesh's curriculum assessing English skills as per academic standard is washback effect, where students have the knowledge but are not capable of effectively demonstrating their skills outside the classroom. This could be credited towards a lack of communication between policymakers and educators. Another point illustrated is that although many schools in Bangladesh put an emphasis on learning “syntax (rules of grammar) and morphology (vocabulary)” it is important to practice these in connection to “semantics (meaning) and pragmatics (language use) by means of interactive activities.” This brought attention to the matter of students being generally unwilling to participate or communicate in

classrooms while face-to-face with the teacher; thus, it has become more important to ensure they communicate online as well.

Another article explored the issue of online learning being implemented nationwide during a pandemic, where Eusuf & Rabi (2020) emphasized the need for not only adopting learning methods but also creating new methods tailored to the particular context. According to them, adopting learning methods from traditional classrooms to online learning would only “partially address the problem,” and they instead encouraged “inclusive alternative methods” to be devised. This article also tackled the flaws that exist in our inflexible and rigid curriculum, suggesting that instead of converting teaching methods teachers should consider trying new methods that work better with online learning systems. The authors additionally suggested coming up with new evaluation methods suited to the results of learning online.

#### **2.4 Changes adopted for learners and teachers during a pandemic**

A report on UNICEF’s website collected accounts from a 13 year old student who said despite attending lectures, she had difficulties understanding the lectures and found them to be ‘monotonous.’ This is a big concern for the students currently enrolled in primary school. To add to the frustration, social media and online games pose as a distraction as well considering that they cannot go outside to play anymore. On a positive note, both Effat and her mother, a teacher herself, were both confident about students returning to school post-pandemic without any long term negative consequences.

Afrin (2020) shared the teaching techniques used by a public university teacher. When the lockdown started and they were in a rush to complete the syllabus, Dr. Taslima

Akter covered key ideas and topics only. She would share her lecture materials such as PowerPoint slides with her students a day or two before the class so they had some time to prepare for it. Formative assessment in the form of post-class quizzes were also taken. Additionally, students who missed the online class could contact her about the lecture. This statement from Akter was useful for making interview questions such as ‘Is the lecture content uploaded somewhere for the students to view later?’, ‘Are materials shared in advance or shown during class?’, ‘How is formative assessment taken?’ Afrin also noted the advantages of online teaching as there were opportunities for increased communication between student and teacher outside of class, no weather or traffic related reason for missing class, and improved attendance and attention as students could join classes from the comfortable setting of their homes.

## **2.5 Scope of Alternative Assessment in schools**

There is a need for trying alternative assessment in the current scenario; schools have been closed for a year now, and with the pandemic continuing, students’ skills have less of a chance being tested in exam halls based on knowledge retention than on applicability through tasks and relevant assessments. A study conducted on alternative assessment reported that despite cognitive growth, there remained a lack of development in using the skills based on the knowledge acquired (Podder & Mizan, 2020). The authors concluded that at the time, CA (continuous assessment or alternative assessment) was not being implemented in schools after interviewing teachers who were trained in CLT (Communicative Language Teaching), and that teachers as well as stakeholders would need further training. One of the participants revealed their desire to implement alternative assessment being road-blocked by the overwhelming responsibilities of

teaching including designing tests, teaching from the textbook, preparing model test practice sessions and checking scripts. Other participants claimed that teachers were not motivated to assess the students continuously due to the policies at school, and that scripts were checked with marks only and no remarks for the students to know where they erred.

## **2.6 Issues of washback, validity and reliability in assessments**

Islam et al. (2021) delved deeper into the assessment practices in the country to highlight the issues of washback, a performance-based assessment culture, lack of motivation for students as well as teachers, and lack of validity and reliability. Summative tests as being the main assessment for students, these final examinations carried 40-50 percent of the total marks. The validity of English skills was under scrutiny according to the authors because listening and speaking are the two major language skills disregarded by the national board exams. Validity is the quality of a test that determines if it indeed assesses the content that was taught for the test (Hughes, 2003, p.26). Instead of testing four skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking as the exams should, only the former two are focused upon by the teachers due to the school curriculum goals testing only these two skills, so a negative washback is affected where students have knowledge but no skills for interactive communication. Reliability is the quality of a test that ensures all students taking it perform similarly (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2019, p. 29). This is an issue in our context as one board had exam scores of “remarkable variations” (Islam et al., 2021). Alternative assessment was mentioned as a solution to encourage peer interaction and group work, which then facilitates effective interactive communication. This assessment could be in the form of “interviews, reflective journals,

or peer and self-assessments,” resulting in a method of learning that is student-centered, developmental and allows for feedback. Furthermore, assessment was said to be a motivating factor for learners instead of teaching itself, so it seems an utmost priority to choose a mode of assessment that encourage the students to perform to their best ability.

## **2.7 Struggles of adopting online education system during a pandemic**

Mahmud et al. (2021) researched the impact of COVID-19 on students to note the challenges they faced in an online education system so suddenly imposed upon them. The teachers struggled as well to not only preserve communication with students but also keeping up with software and technology skills required to manage web-based classrooms. A list of challenges involving students were them keeping their cameras off while the teacher was obligated to show their face, hardly responding to queries or statements, seeming uninterested in lecture materials as distractions at home scattered their attention, and having short attention spans while looking at a screen therefore attending class for a short time and leaving or disconnecting the conference call. There were also issues of anxiety and demotivation noted from studying during a pandemic that interfered with their focus in class.

All these reports were taken into account while developing the questions for interview and survey. The literature available on the keywords online education, pandemic, primary level students, and English Language teaching were scarce, with most research papers focusing on secondary or higher education. Therefore, the research gap inspired the aim of this paper in rooting out the ways education has changed for the primary learners of Bangladesh. Not only students but teachers as well are having to adapt their teaching strategies, methods, management of online classrooms, assessment



techniques and so on. In summary, the changes and challenges in transforming a curriculum from traditional to online learning is an area worth observing and keeping track of, as it affects how the current e-learning generation of students develop into the leaders of our future.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

A qualitative research was conducted that focused on the changes brought about in teaching English online, at the primary level of education during COVID-19, as all schools were closed for the duration of conducting this research. This type of research required a small sample size for data, allowing for exploratory and in-depth research. The findings were presented in a narrative approach, tying in the perspectives of parents, teachers and students. The overall objective of the research was to observe the changes adopted in school policies, teaching methods and curriculum, and to understand if these changes were sufficient to continue online learning indefinitely.

#### **3.2 Participants**

There were three groups of participants – teachers, parents, and students. Each group had 5 participants, bringing the total to 15. The teachers were all employed in English Medium schools. The students were from mixed backgrounds – 1 from Bengali Medium, 2 from English Medium, and 2 from Bengali Medium (English Version). Their names have been kept anonymous, and were referred to as S1, S2, P1, P2, T1, T2 and so on. S1 (aged 13 years) and S4 (aged 12 years) were from Class 6, S2 (aged 8 years) and S5 (aged 7 years) were from Class 1, and S3 was from Class 4 (aged 11 years).

### **3.3 Data Collection**

Teachers and students, the primary sources of data, were interviewed online with a semi-flexible list of questions, which changed as per the direction of the interview. Interview was the chosen method of gathering data from teachers as in-depth input is required to understand their decision-making process for transforming an in-class curriculum to an entirely online-based curriculum. Parents were surveyed to observe their role in connecting their child to the teacher by providing internet connection, devices, and an environment conducive to attending school from home. Students of Class 1-8 (ages 6-15) were interviewed as well so as to obtain elaborate and opinionated answers, and to avoid confusion regarding the questions due to their ages.

The secondary sources of data were existing literature, mainly articles written prior to, at the beginning of, and a year after the pandemic shut down schools in Bangladesh.

In order to avoid ethical issues, each participant was informed before commencing recording. Recordings were made on Zoom or phone calls.

### **3.4 Data Analysis**

Research questions 1 and 2 were answered with data from the teachers, while answering question 3 depended largely on the insight of parents and students. The main objective was to identify the changes made to the system of teaching language online, as schools and teachers tried to deliver a similar quality of content and assessment, and to discuss if they may work in favour of the students in the long term. A thematic analysis was applied

to the data gathered from interviews and survey responses. The six step thematic analysis is as follows:

Step 1: preparing and organizing the data for analysis

Step 2: initially exploring the data through the process of coding it

Step 3: using the codes to generalize the data, and develop themes and descriptions

Step 4: representing the findings through narratives and visuals

Step 5: interpreting the meaning of the results by reflecting on the significance of the findings, and on the resulting literature

Step 6: conducting strategies to validate the accuracy of the findings (Cresswell, 2014).

The analysis was carried out as such:

Preparation of data: audio recordings of interviews were transcribed line by line and a separate document for the researcher's use marked which questions from the interview question list were answered throughout the interview. The interviews did not follow the order of the questions necessarily, as several questions were answered at once or new questions were asked. Coding the data was part of organizing it; sections of the interviews were marked with the questions they answered. Developing themes came from descriptive answers regarding motivation, assessments, and other classroom procedures and so on. The codes were developed into themes connected to the question list, and have been presented as sub-headings for the Findings chapter. The themes for the Discussion chapter have been generalized and narrowed down from the data itself. Narratives in Findings were represented through the views of teachers, parents, and students. In-depth

and flexible questions created the visual scenario for the virtual classroom. Results have thus been interpreted by reviewing findings, and connecting it to literature review as well as ELT terminology known to the researcher. The accuracy of the findings have been validated by either surveying the respective parents of interviewed students, or by interviewing teachers from the school of a certain student. For example, T4 and T5 both teach at the school S1 and S2 attend. P4 is the parent of S1 and S2. Similarly, P2 is the parent of S5. As a result, the accuracy of the findings were validated when common information was provided such as the same number of classes per day or the same duration of time per class by T4 and S1.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **FINDINGS**

As indicated in the methodology section, research questions 1 and 2 were addressed by data from teachers, and 3 was answered by data from parents and students. In order to preserve anonymity of the participants, teachers have been referred to as T1, T2, T3, T4 and T5. Parents have been referred to as P1, P2, P3, P4 and P5. Students have been referred to as S1, S2, S3, S4, S5. The themes for this chapter originated from the questionnaires, which were developed to answer the research questions. Subchapter 4.1 is about classroom management and other policies, motivating students, and the general shift to an online class. 4.2 addresses evaluation procedures and assessment issues, while 4.3 delves into the online learning issues that were experienced by students.

#### **4.1 Addressing Research Question 1**

##### ***4.1.1 Online classroom mode and management***

Initially, when the pandemic first forced schools to close down, classes were taken on ClassTune and Google Meet applications by two of the teachers. They have shifted to Zoom since then because of the broader range of functions as later elaborated in 4.1.7, and because one teacher reports that there were glitches and delays in ClassTune app. All of the teachers interviewed now use Zoom to conduct classes as the platform allows video conferencing for large groups, a ‘raise hand’ function and various other features.

The classes before the pandemic were of 40-45 minutes in duration, and now have been reduced to 35-40 minutes each. The number of classes per day has also been reduced from seven or eight periods to three or four or even five periods.

The teachers named screen sharing as the most useful feature on Zoom, acknowledging the benefits in sharing a screen for all students to see without them needing to find the materials or open a link. In this way, all the students are seeing the same material at once and are at the same pace of a video – something not achievable in a regular classroom even.

Every class has a monitor assigned to account for internet disruptions on the teacher's end – until the teacher gets back, the monitor takes charge of the class. T3 has two monitors managing the class in her absence, which is especially helpful during class tests.

#### ***4.1.2 Student attitude***

Students had a mostly positive reaction to the online classroom according to the teachers. However, all the teachers noted a decline in interest in communication and active participation in class. T3 noted that although students were excited about online classes initially, their expressions recently suggested it has been 'imposed upon them' and that they were tired of doing classes this way. Boredom is another commonly noted expression, with teachers having to deviate from their subject topic in order to get their attention back.

With online classrooms keeping students out of their teacher's direct line of sight, cheating and dishonest submissions of assignments have increased. T1 noted that she received assignments done in a different handwriting than her student's, presumably the

student's parent's handwriting. Besides this, T1, T3, T4 all noted that sometimes a student's parent was sitting beside them in class and helping them during tests. Although the students were warned, the parents were not dissuaded. T2 said another disruption was parents feeding their children in front of the camera while class is in session – a common problem in the junior classes such as Play Group to Class 3.

Unlike Google Meet, Zoom offers the feature of seeing all the participants in one frame. Teachers were not always able to take advantage of this as students refuse to turn on their cameras as T5 claims. In some cases, the students did not turn on their microphone or respond despite a teacher's query. T3 noted that on some days, student decided not to attend classes based on the topic – if it was before a test, they were likely to attend but not the classes after their tests. She knew this very well because as Class Teacher, she took attendance at the beginning of the school day, so she could notice when a student had not logged in or logged in but remained inactive.

#### ***4.1.3 Participation and student motivation***

The students of class 2 and class 3 were generally excited for a chance to speak and answer the teacher as T2 claimed, and were dejected when they did not all get a chance to speak.

T3 and T4 used to take breaks from their class content to discuss a topic of interest for 5 minutes in order to get their interests back. As T3 understood it, the students were energetic at the beginning of the day so they became more reserved or unresponsive at the last class. They sometimes even chose to not attend the class - an option not available to them before the pandemic.



Groups work and pair work were two of the practices preferred by T1 to get students engaged among themselves and with the teacher. Zoom has the feature of breakout rooms, where students can discuss a topic among themselves and after returning to the classroom can share their answer.

#### ***4.1.4 Effect on English skills***

There is no doubt that the practice of English skills changed, especially with less face-to-face communication. Students tended to respond less now that they attended classes from behind a screen. If this continues they may lose focus due to the possibility of not meeting their teachers in person. Most of the schools in Bangladesh have extensive lesson plans on writing and reading tasks as exams demand proficiency in those two skills particularly. T1 and T3 said only debating in class is a practice they get regularly for speaking and listening, with recitation and giving speeches as other, seldom used tasks. There is a newfound scope for engaging students in more speaking and listening activities as schools are opting for oral quizzes instead of written ones as a measure against cheating.

“Initially, they had fewer classes but now they have the usual number of classes,” said T1. T2, T3, and T4 on the other hand claimed that practice of writing has declined as fewer classes are taken per day, broad question-answers are no longer included on tests, and only one appears in the term exams. Writing has further declined as tests are taken online where they pick MCQs or respond with one word or one sentence answers on Google Form, which showed their result immediately. Objective questions were also being implemented over broader, subjective ones in online tests in order to speed up the

process of checking, further compromising the quality of writing. Reading remained in practice as students easily read aloud from their books in turn.

#### ***4.1.5 Assignment submission and checking***

Students were assigned homework on Google Classroom, which they downloaded, answered the questions in their copies, and sent pictures of via email or the application mentioned. T1 expressed her frustration over the quality of submission during the interview – not the quality of writing, rather of the pictures sent. Not all students had scanners at home so they took pictures of their work with a phone camera and emailed it or uploaded it as a PDF file to Google Classroom or ClassTune app. The pictures were often blurry, making the task of checking scripts on the teacher’s device much harder. T3 said she has had to get two pair of spectacles since she started checking scripts on her phone. She opted for her phone over her laptop as the touchscreen function of the smaller device allowed her to add comments, check for mistakes and comprehensive errors, and made it easier for her to scroll through and judge the overall assignments.

#### ***4.1.6 Providing feedback***

Feedback was delivered on the PDFs of classwork and homework. Teachers added comments via Adobe Reader, or in Google Classroom where the assignment was uploaded, or via email.

It was considered impossible to gauge every student’s expression from all their camera feeds fitted onto one screen. T1 and T4 particularly missed being able to tell which student grasped the concept and who did not from their expressions. Thus, providing immediate clarification was impossible unless the students asked questions.

T1 sent feedback to students individually through email, whereas as T2 and T3 added comments on Google Classroom where their homework was uploaded. T4 took it a step further by adding ‘voice notes’ to their homework or test scripts so that they could hear their teacher’s feedback instead of reading it. The students had the responsibility of reading the feedback and getting back to the teacher with queries. Common problems were discussed in class, and sometimes teachers asked the academically weaker students if they needed clarification on their scores.

#### ***4.1.7 Technological assistance***

As previously mentioned, Zoom Cloud Meetings, or more commonly referred as Zoom, was the most popular platform to conduct online classes.

Google Form was used by the teachers for taking objective questions where MCQs or one word/line answers are assessed immediately for the student to see their results.

ClassTune is a multi-purpose tool offered to schools in Bangladesh. It can host classes, store assignments, display results as well as prepare the academic report card for parents to access and download.

Google Meet is a tool from Google similar to Zoom but with less functions. It can still allow hosts to record and share screen, but the chat box is shared so no two students can communicate privately. T3 called this a benefit as students chatting privately on Zoom created a disruption to the class depending on how many students were doing it during class.

#### ***4.1.8 Teacher training***

All the teachers received training on using Zoom, Google Classroom, ClassTune and Google Meet. Additionally, T2 had to attend ‘demo meetings’ after classes to pitch in with ideas on tackling online teaching. The teachers shared ideas from other teachers at different schools.

Besides receiving training, teachers had to in turn demonstrate to parents how to help the students log in to the apps, download work and upload homework, take and send pictures of their classwork and tests.

## **4.2 Addressing Research Question 2**

### ***4.2.1 Evaluation procedures***

Most of the schools shut down as directed by the government in March 2020, with online classes started a few months later. Some of the schools concluded the term and gave results for the academic year based on what had been done so far. T1’s school had been preparing for the fourth quarterly report card in March, so their syllabus was complete and testing nearly so. A few more tests were taken orally, and then the term ended in May. Since then, schools have been better prepared for the currently ongoing academic year (May/June session).

Both formative and summative tests were taken, along with oral quizzes and surprise tests to assess the students’ performance alongside their competence. Test times were reduced to 10 minutes instead of 20 and exam times to 30 minutes instead of 40, according to T2, who taught students of Class 2, 3 and 4. T4, who taught students of class 7 and 8, noted that exam duration went from 2 hours to 1 hour. This was due to the increase in objective questions, thus requiring less critically analytic answers.

Usually, these tests and exams had time limits set. If the students could not submit within time, they had to notify the teacher immediately. So that students avoided problems accessing the test questions, the question sheet was released a few minutes early on Google Classroom. Students could then solve it, and send their answers by email or by uploading it to ClassTune. Objective question test results featuring MCQ type questions were revealed to students immediately after they submitted as Google Form prepared the correct/incorrect score.

#### ***4.2.2 Question pattern and difficulty level***

As mentioned above, most question patterns were simplified – not at the difficulty level but at the structure. There was only one or no broad questions for students if they have to type the answers or sit for the test online. If they wrote it by hand and sent pictures, then there were possibly more items. Questions were mostly objective when tests were taken online. T2 acknowledged that a shortened time duration put pressure on the students but emphasized that a higher number of objective questions helped earn easy marks. The students were also required to write less as class 2 tests had one-word-answer questions whereas class 3 tests had one-line-answer questions.

#### ***4.2.3 Mark distribution and grading***

The mark distribution changed in accordance with question pattern. The half-yearly and final exams at T3 and T4's schools were scored out of 40 marks each instead of 100 due to a lower number of tasks and reduced duration. In contrast, T2's school scored the final exam out of a score of 80 marks – and this accounted for 80% of the total

grade. Test marks were usually of 20 marks before the pandemic; they were now scored out of 10 marks. Thus, exams had the most impact on student grades.

All the schools had an A-F grading policy for the report card except for T2's school. As she taught in a junior section, they graded students out of a scale from 1-9 from the British Council. There were 15 criteria including handwriting, participation, bringing books on time, dress code, helping out classmates, extracurricular activities etc. that factored into the score.

#### ***4.2.4 Validity and reliability***

As the school syllabuses were not altered significantly, and the test items were changed in structure of items but not in difficulty level, the tests were claimed to be valid. Validity of an assessment is either tested content-wise or construct-wise which mean the questions should include all the content taught, and should test only the skills that are being assessed (Hughes, 2003, p.26). According to the teachers, average student performance were more or less consistent with last year's results. This may be due to the syllabus being kept the same, and the use of more objective items which increased test reliability (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2019, p.29).

#### ***4.2.5 Washback***

The one item students were getting less practice of in English classes was writing. T2 claimed otherwise, however T1, T3 and T4 said that broad questions were barely there in tests if not entirely cut from tests in order to alleviate the pressure from students. The final exam may have included broad answer questions but it meant the students were not practicing much writing through the rest of the term. There was a risk, therefore, of

experiencing washback – the students may get used to online exams and writing short and precise answers for the time being as their formative assessments test performance with objective items (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2019, p.29). T2 herself stated that sometimes students did not respond to the teacher, asking her to answer her own question relying on the assumption that she would give them the correct answer eventually. In an alternate scenario, had the students been in a real classroom, they would have asked questions out of curiosity and tried to understand the complete syllabus. They would not have then focused on items that would come in their tests and exams, and they would not wait for the teacher to give them the precise answers.

### **4.3 Addressing Research Question 3**

This section is answered by parents' and students' data because both are now involved in ensuring education, attendance, getting work done more than ever. Students may not offer enough data by themselves, while parents offer more detailed or accurate info, and more insight into their motivation.

#### ***4.3.1 Practice at home***

When asked, the students said they studied at home the same amount of time as before the pandemic. They did their classwork, homework, tests and exams at the same place so there was no lack of practice. Other than that, they did not have any authentic conversations at home in English. Only S1 and S3 liked to read books for leisure.

According to P3, her son was assigned more homework now than before the pandemic. He had to leave his coaching, so he was studying more by himself now.

However, he was never interested in reading books or studying materials so that practice has been reduced now. He did not speak English unless his cousins from abroad visited.

#### ***4.3.2 Dealing with distractions and demotivation***

S3 said game notification popping up on the device (mobile phone) she used during class was a distraction for her. S1 said that students were 'naughty' in Zoom classes and used the private chat box to communicate. They also did not pay attention in class, making the teacher inquire after them. These events distracted S1 and other students from the class. In general, when they were bored of sitting in front of a screen for hours and did not have their friends beside them, they lost focus and interest.

P3 said her son has lost enthusiasm for online classes. If he missed classes, he said he would watch the class recordings and study provided notes. He is said to be shy, so he did not participate in class a lot.

All 5 students claimed in-person classes were better because they could see the teacher in front of them, and because they had their friends next to them. As a result, they all wished for schools to reopen. A common complaint was that online classes were boring.

Extra-curricular activity was yet another aspect students missed about school. Now at home they only get to focus on academic subjects. Even if some classes tried to arrange club and ECA classes virtually, they were not as engaged as before. T1's school recently resumed physical education classes as well as science fairs online, so there was a scope for ECA but not in any interactive way.

#### ***4.3.3 Effectiveness of lectures***



Although most of the students claimed to understand what their teacher was saying, 2 of them relied on recorded lectures on take notes. That way they could focus on the teacher's lecture with full attention. 2 out of 5 students said their teachers were very helpful; they constantly asked if they had questions and encouraged the students to ask questions. The other three however pointed out the difficulty of asking questions during a virtual class. They did not wish to interrupt the class by turning their microphones on; nor did they (S4) get the opportunity to ask due to the limited time duration of the class. P4 and P5 (who were teachers of primary level students as well) said that in class raising the hand physically gets the teacher's attention quickly, and it was easier for students to ask questions if the teacher took questions. A corroborative statement suggests the reasoning behind this – T4 claimed that without seeing her students' expression directly she did not know who was confused about the concepts, so she did not know to clarify unless the students asked.

While the students found the online classes manageable, some felt nervous during tests. P2 said that it might be difficult for her child to complete a test and then take pictures, make a PDF and email it to the teacher given the short time limit. S4 feared WiFi or electricity disruptions making her late to submit her work, in which case her teacher would not allow a make-up test or accept any late submissions. She once lost the marks of one such test and her average went down. Running out of time before finishing her test was also one of her concerns.

#### ***4.3.4 Return to offline classroom***

Every parent interviewed wanted their child to be able to go back to the physical classroom, but only if their health and safety could be guaranteed. Teachers and parents

alike thought it would be better to keep some online practices continued, such as uploading recorded lectures online or taking tests online so that no one would miss important classes if they could not go to school.

The students all wanted to return to school, and S4 shares a concern with the others that getting up early to leave for school would be the one difficult activity to return to. T5 shared this sentiment as well, that students (of grades 5-7) would have to get back to a disciplined lifestyle where they could not attend class while lying in their bed.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DISCUSSION**

The process of analyzing the data thematically provided headings about student motivation, assessment, online classroom management, teachers' challenges etc. The data was obtained to answer interview and survey questions, which were developed based on the research questions. So, we can say the data answers the research questions. However, it remains to be seen if the Findings cover the research gap between the existing literature and the research objective. The research objective is to see if the current changes adapted to ELT are enough to continue online education successfully in the post-COVID world or if they leave more to be desired.

#### **5.1 Technological challenges**

The first secondary resource cited in the literature review (2.2) was about the lack of reliable technology and device literacy when e-learning was first introduced in Bangladesh (Islam & Selim, 2006). Over the past 30 years, devices are now more commonly seen in the hands of pre-adolescents and adolescents than adults. Primarily used for games and entertainment viewing, the smart devices such as phones and tablets were already being operated by children ages 3 and up. Not only do these devices access the Internet, they also run applications for educational activities. With a few taps on a touchscreen, students can attend class, write documents, upload or submit their work among several other features. This makes it safe to say that the issues of unreliable technology is no longer relevant. However, primary level students are not necessarily

familiar with advanced operations such as retrieving links and logging in or checking email. According to interviews with the teachers, it took about a month or two to get everyone – including students and parents of younger students such as in Class 1-4 – accustomed to using Google Classroom, ClassTune, Zoom and other applications. This might not be an issue with adult students so technological literacy was not mentioned in any existing literature from recent years.

## **5.2 The need for teacher autonomy**

Teacher autonomy has been mentioned in a few studies, claiming that a lack of freedom to assess students as per their needs creates a context-reduced assessment culture (Islam & Selim, 2006). The students' performance does not account for much of their total grade, their competence being the primary target due to societal expectations and national curriculum board standards. The majority of their grades come from the mid-term and final term exams at their school, which totals to 40 or 50 percent of their grades. T2's school takes it further, assessing students of Class 1-4 by assigning 80% of the total grade to their final exam alone. This creates a pressure on the students to perform extremely well in their final exam, whereas they might have been more relaxed during their tests as those would not count for much in a general sense. With this final exam determining their grade for the year, teachers also feel the need to prepare them for the final exam better rather than broaden their area of knowledge for curiosity. That is, their competence is given priority above their performance. It appeared to be disheartening for students to receive a grade mostly dependent on their final exams which are limited to a 1 or 2-hour assessment after a year of spending hours upon hours for homework, class

work, surprise tests and marked quizzes. Projects are fun for them to demonstrate their skills with, but again, these works account for a minor percentage of the grade.

Even when a teacher wants to do right by students and assess their accessible skills over memory, they find obstacles such as an overwhelming workload checking scripts, designing tests, taking classes and teaching from textbooks (Podder & Mizan, 2020). T1's opinion was no different – they want to help students beyond class time, and assess students fairly given that question patterns have been made simpler if not easier in content. Her obstacles consist of the parents who help her students during class tests and exams, and her requests for turning the microphone or camera on ignored. Her own performance is under scrutiny; if she makes a mistake during class, the parent takes a picture or screenshot and parent it to the school's administration. This close monitoring and control over the student's class behavior was not possible before, and only interferes with the teacher's methods.

### **5.3 The significance of alternative assessment**

Alternative assessments have been emphasized upon in quite a few of the studies. Also known as continuous assessment, it refers to assessing students' performance throughout the term (Podder & Mizan, 2020). All 5 teacher participants said they assess them by asking questions and catering to the weaker students' needs, although this has gotten difficult given they cannot notice their expressions or body language as they did before. Taking formative assessments with a higher frequency is a feasible suggestion, however it is unlikely to motivate students to actively perform if these assessments do not carry significant weight towards their grades. Summative assessments test overall knowledge of all the topics taught over the school year, and competence in all topics such

as grammar, vocabulary, comprehension and composition for primary students. Unlike secondary or tertiary institutes which cannot deviate from the standard examination requirements much, primary schools should have the scope to change their curriculum and assessment criteria, especially considering that they test only about 120-180 students per grade at each school whereas more than a million students sit for board exams at grades 10 and 12 and the consequent university admission exams.

#### **5.4 Interactivity in and outside the academic context**

Some suggestions to increase interactivity as well as conducting alternative assessment are introducing variety to class tasks and formative assessments. If the assessments carry weight in the final grade, students will be more motivated to perform well. Varied activities could be group work, interviews, peer and self-assessments, keeping in mind that in English subjects it is easy to structure activities around skill use instead of the traditional approach of sitting and reading, writing, taking tests (Podder & Mizan, 2020). Context can be included as well, adjusting worksheets to include Bangladeshi events. The main idea is to move away from constructing text in every task and to actively perform skills while building communicative competence. The benefit will not only be gaining student interest, but also combatting negative washback consequences. The less skills involved, the more washback incurred; this refers to teaching students skills which will appear on their exams, leading them to only learn and practice those particular skills. The consequence was already experienced by T2 – as her students waited for her to answer her own question without attempting to participate themselves. It is worth repeating that primary schools allow for diverse skill-using activities, while grades preparing for public exams only focus on writing and reading

skills. The neglect of speaking and listening skills is observable in curriculum textbooks, both public and private.

Distractions play a key role in student performance. In schools, students may have daydreamed or been disturbed by a fellow classmate. Otherwise, the distractions would be fairly controlled given they were under the teacher's eye in a confined space. At home, the distractions are endless. From parents speaking to them, to siblings interrupting, and even devices showing notifications or computer tabs allowing multitasking, the students can tend to a number of activities, especially if they choose to keep their cameras off. S1 reported that her classmates would chat privately on Zoom in the middle of class. The teacher asking everyone to turn their cameras and microphones on was also an interruption to the lesson. This is due to an inappropriate setting for their study. Attention spans are short for children, and monotonous activities do not hold their interest for long (Brown, 1984, p. 88). The teacher has to be engaging, lively, and apply a variety of tasks that involve students directly in their learning rather than giving a lecture and expecting them to listen attentively and then ask questions. Solutions include activities requiring continuous participation, not only asking them if they understood or have any questions, but also taking mid-lecture questions and post-lesson quizzes regularly.

Assessment is not the only sector education can improve in. Extracurricular activities also need to be resumed. Schools are facing difficulty in managing syllabus by cutting down on classes per day to alleviate the pressure of sitting in front of a screen. Very few schools have continued non-academic classes, such as Physical Education in T1's school. It is a commendable decision as students could use a break from staring straight a screen so close to them, as well as a chance to get up and stretch their limbs.

Students miss interacting with their friends and attending ECAs regularly, and wish to return to school so they can be social again. Interviewing the students brought about this realization: students have a social life within the academic context. Visiting relatives is not their primary source of contact so having to lose their everyday interaction with their friends, with whom they spent entire days with for the majority of the week even if for educational purposes, serves to remind that they are in dire need of interaction. Certainly, attending classes online where the teacher can hear everyone through their microphones spares no time for personal communication, making their day even more monotonous. ECAs were not mentioned in the literature sources, possibly due to the fact that secondary and tertiary level classes do not have non-academic subjects in the curriculum. For example, schools used to have music, art and games periods incorporated into their weekly routines. However, SSC/HSC/O-A Level students and university students have their academic routines packed with exam-relevant classes.

### **5.5 Validity and reliability in assessments**

Validity and reliability are two other criteria to meet in testing. Validity demands that skills being taught are the skills to be required in the test, and reliability depends on the consistency of results produced from the tests. If schools by default assess two skills with priority, their test may have validity but any other national or international standard of testing would find a lack of skill in speaking and writing. Given that English as a language requires proficiency in 4 skills, schools do practice speaking and listening activities in a limited scope, but have no tasks in exams testing those skills. The national curriculum textbook does not include enough speaking/listening activities, resulting in teachers neglecting those skills in secondary schools. As reported in a study published in



2021, the national exam results varied remarkably, bringing the reliability of this test into doubt (Islam et al.). The student pool is certainly large enough that there are bound to be discrepancies in student competence and ability to perform under pressure. This is not surprising given there are thousands of high schools in this country. So the four standardized (SSC and HSC, O and A Level) exams determining their academic future and career path are bound to produce skewed results from students learning in thousands of different curriculums.

### **5.6 Students' fears**

The issues faced by students are in submitting homework, taking tests, and understanding lectures. They have to submit homework after taking pictures and combining them into PDF format. If they are too young to do so, their parents have to do it for them. With taking tests comes anxiety when they have to rely on the internet for delivery. At school they would have handed their work to the teacher personally but now due to internet connectivity issues or device charging issues, they have experienced losing their work and needing to start over again. The time limit also puts a pressure on them. Students in universities submit work typed, whereas junior students have to write their answers, again take pictures and send them to the teacher via email or another application in time. The sense of isolation during taking tests is also an issue, as they are always confident of being self-reliant. Teachers at school could tell them to stop looking at others' work, but now they can easily take help from a parent. It does not help that time for tests have decreased while objective questions have increased. Even if it is a simpler question structure, the pressure is likely to increase. S1 is nervous about completing all the tasks on her test in time, given the possibility of internet or electricity disruptions.

Another source of anxiety may be the close monitoring, with everyone's face and body on the screen in one place for the teacher to oversee. That is, if everyone complies with the rule of keeping their cameras on.

### **5.7 Feedback**

After tests, comes the task of teachers giving feedback. Feedback is essential in improving one's performance and being alerted to one's weakness. Be it grammar or vocabulary or structure, the students need to be accurate in the skills they practice. Podder & Mizan claimed there was no scope for feedback as university students are provided with their marks only (2020). Primary school students on the other hand received detailed feedback, in the form of individual commentary on each of their answers. Some teachers (such as T4) use Google Form, some add voice notes (T5) and some email (T1) the feedback. A few of the participants even check with their students whether they have read and understood the feedback. S5 is however not as lucky. His email queries sometimes go unanswered. Students do not wish to interrupt class to ask questions, as the teacher will not be in the room past class time. Zoom limits group conferences to 40 minutes at their basic plan, so the students and the teacher are in a race to complete the lesson before time runs out and disconnects them.

### **5.8 Taking advantage of the virtual classroom**

The teachers in schools should be encouraged to embed context in their class activities. Tests should not be taken with objective, discreet items for quick assessments. Rather, including subjective questions that facilitate critical thinking and creative writing will be better for their skill applicability. According to Rahman et al.'s study, school

students are taught syntax and morphology without much attention to pragmatics and semantics (2019). They have the knowledge but not the ability to perform spontaneously in authentic interactions. This will be a disadvantage when they enroll in university and see that they are expected to partake in discourse and write elaborate analytical papers that require critical thinking and organized writing. As Eusuf & Rabi suggested, new teaching methods need to be developed rather than “converting” traditional methods (2020). Our school system has completely shifted online not because of the academic benefits, rather because a pandemic forced institutes to shut down suddenly. Resuming classes online under short notice means a lack of preparation. Teachers were trained mainly in using the software and applications, to keep the system running. None mentioned any training towards keeping student spirits lifted, or changing their teaching techniques, or even using technology to their advantages to any significant degree. Some teachers did use YouTube and other websites during classes for a change of pace, but none of these mixed media content were used in a marked assessment. Despite the opportunity of using various tools on the internet for reliable, interactive teaching, no school or teacher has attempted to reform assessment to test integrated skills. The implications therefore suggest that without reform, student will lose interest and the ability to apply their English language skills by the time they apply for university, where they will no doubt face barriers in writing and speaking at length in course assignments.

## **5.9 Summary**

In summary, the findings did answer my research questions better than secondary sources. As mentioned in the research gap, none of the current studies focused on primary level of education. Most of the studies debated the challenges of secondary and tertiary

education, with one small section of one research paper mentioning primary level education. The literature review was necessary in order to form questions that would fill the gap, and the data collected had common themes that could be generalized. My expectations for what the research questions would reveal were unsatisfactorily met. There were no remarkable reforms in teaching or assessment. The mark distribution and grading system were not relaxed, although questions for tests and exams were patterned in an easy to answer and check structure. The loss here was incurred by students; more objective questions and less subjective questions mean their skill is used limitedly, and though it may be easier to gain marks with precise answers, it is also reflective of their ability to perform. Less broad questions mean their writing has been reduced. Making up for that through homework does not balance it out as their tests produce pressure-induced results and are what carries the majority of their grade. So if they spend more time and effort in their home assignments, they are not rewarded for it fairly.

As the teachers reported a decline in interest, which is corroborated in the secondary sources, there seems to be no solutions targeted. Switching topics or taking a free class are limited options availed rarely. If the students are to be motivated to interact in every class, and have their attention fixed every day, their classroom activities need some variety. Instead of listening to the teacher and responding to their queries, they should be encouraged to communicate with their peers and ask innovative questions out of curiosity. This is important at a time they are already isolated from their peers, in an attempt to keep their skills in efficient use.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

The research objective aimed to determine if the changes adapted to ELT are enough for a post-COVID scenario, where students continue their education online as reopening institutions seem unlikely in the foreseeable future. Reliability and validity are existing issues in Bangladesh's schools; however primary schools do involve speaking and listening in classes if not assessments. The problem persists in a lack of interactivity in the classroom. Isolation of students has occurred not only in the classroom, but beyond it as students reach out to teachers through emails and instant messages instead of in-person. Peer communication in the academic context has halted, with class tasks the only time allowing interaction. Is it feasible to continue education of primary students this way? The research conducted, and the data from students especially, suggest the answer is negative. The complaint of classes being monotonous, and not preferring online classes because of missing peers, suggest that this is an ineffectual form of learning.

My conclusion may be contested by school results, and teachers who reported that results did not vary by much in comparison to the past year. Nevertheless, it is apparent that teachers and students alike are frustrated with this current system. Both groups wish for education to return to the traditional setting, as that is most effective is teaching and learning language skills. The third research question inquired about the implications of learning English online. For now, the schools have decided to continue assessing them objectively, with duration and test frequency reduced. They might be meeting the lesson

goals and objectives, but that is only on paper, presumably because the skills that are assessed in examinations are specifically the skills that are taught. When they go on to secondary schools, and then university where they will have to take and attend interviews, they may face problems constructing English language confidently. The claim for educational reforms being necessary is not wrong. The opportunity to use mixed media, to actually present listening and speaking tasks, is unmissable. As learning changes with context, so can assessments – there are thousands of materials and tests to take and study on the internet. A teacher only has to have some autonomy to be able to include those materials so that students can improve and apply all of their language skills. If they do that, return to school at any point in the future will not be a problem.

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## Appendix

### APPENDIX A

#### Questionnaire for Teacher's Interview

1. Which class do you teach, and what are the titles of the subjects?
2. Has the syllabus content changed from the past year, before COVID-19 shut down schools? If so, how?
3. Are textbooks/lecture materials provided online or as e-books? If not, where are these materials available for student access?
4. How are the classes conducted (web-based platform)?
5. Are recorded lectures provided?
6. How are students assessed during class? Do they have any individual participation?
7. Are students eager to participate in class, or are they hesitant? What about their attendance rate?
8. How is class work checked/submitted? How about homework, tests, and exams? Is there any scope for cheating?
9. This is a language class so there are four skills to practice – reading, writing, speaking and listening. Are all four practiced in class by each student?
10. Is the structure/question pattern or difficulty level of tests and exams the same as before COVID-19?
11. Is the grading policy the same as before?
12. Are there any projects or virtual group works?
13. How is participation elicited?

14. Do students get easily distracted?
15. Is there any scope for providing assessment feedback to students? Are tests discussed in class?
16. Are parents helpful or obstructive?
17. How is taking classes online different from before COVID-19 in your opinion?
18. How is it different managing an online classroom from a traditional one?
19. How different do the lesson plans look? (Time duration, breaks, change in content?)
20. What is done in case of internet interruptions during class/texts/exams?
21. Has scoring tests become any different? Or do they bear the same criteria as before?
22. Has any training been provided to you before conducting online classes?
23. Are teachers instructed to use any particular software for testing/checking scripts?
24. What are some of the challenges and changes you experienced while transforming the class mode from in-person to online?
25. If schools reopen, how will learning look like? Will classes, tests or homework continue to be taken online in part or completely?
26. How has online learning been beneficial or harmful for students? Will they have any difficulty returning to schools?

## APPENDIX B

### Questionnaire for Student's Interview

1. How do you practice English at home? In class only, or by reading books and watching shows in English as well?
2. Which platform is used for your classes? Zoom/Google Meet/Google Classroom? Do you have any issues using these applications/websites?
3. Are the lectures effective? Can you understand what the teacher is saying?
4. Are you comfortable studying the materials provided?
5. Can you independently solve worksheets at home? How do you submit your work to the teacher?
6. Do you need help from your parents with technology often?
7. Is it difficult to sit in front of the computer/device for the duration of the class?
8. Is it difficult to look at the screen for the length of your class?
9. Are you required to take notes as the teacher takes the class? Is that difficult?
10. Do you prefer classes in-person or online?
11. Do you feel better focus in a school classroom? If so, how?
12. Are you used to online learning after a year?
13. Are you nervous when taking your tests? What are some of your fears?
14. Will returning to school be difficult or easy?

## APPENDIX C

### Questionnaire for Parent's Survey

1. How are students coping with online classes? Is it taking a toll on their mental or physical health?
2. Has their attitude towards school work, class changed? How?
3. Have you had to help them with devices/applications regularly? How often?
4. Are they motivated to learn?
5. Do they hesitate to participate in class? If so, why?
6. Do they spend more time studying at home?
7. What are some of their struggles with online learning?
8. What effect is online learning having on their education? Are their English skills affected, with less or more practice on reading/writing/speaking/listening? If so, how?
9. How confident are they in general with their English skills outside the class?
10. Do they struggle with homework, projects?
11. Do they ask for help with English vocabulary, sentence construction and such exercises?
12. Will their return to school be difficult? Why or why not?

## APPENDIX D

### Interview Transcripts for Teachers

#### **Transcript of Interview with T1**

Q: Has the syllabus changed from the past year?

A: Yes, it has changed.

Can you describe how?

We have no practical classes, students are writing on the books instead of copies and sending pictures. So, we have them work with those books instead of unseen worksheets.

We have reduced other activity classes as well.

Are any materials provided online?

Now it is easy to share materials with them; previously, they did not understand how to use these platforms and how to submit their homework. We are taking PE classes, dance and all activity classes online.

Do they have ebooks?

No, at first we had the books and shared questions through pictures but this year they have bought their books from the shops.

How do they submit their work?

On ClassTune app. We can give the attendance there, now we take classwork and homework on the app as well. First two or three months, they struggled but now they

know how to use these online platforms. They can also send it through email by scanning into a pdf.

Can they send pictures in JPEG format?

Yes they can. They have the option to.

Do you find Zoom easy to use?

Yes, I was new to using this app as well.

Do you provide any recorded lectures?

No, only live classes.

Which classes do you teach?

Grammar, creative writing, comprehension, composition, these things.

Do you focus on reading and writing only, or speaking and listening as well?

Reading and writing. We are not doing listening that much, but speaking is practiced.

How so?

I have some items in my lesson plan like public speaking, speeches, discussing topics in class.

Do they get to speak individually?

Yes, we divide them into groups and so they speak in turns.

What is the length of their classes?

40 minutes.

Same number of classes per week?

Yes, same for now. Initially, they had fewer classes but now they have the usual number of classes.

When did the school year start?

June.

How did you wrap up the term last year?

It was a good thing that we covered up to third quarter by then. Only two months of the last session were left, so we had most of the grades.

Were there any exams taken?

No, we just released the results based on the three quarters. The syllabus was almost completely covered as well. We took oral assessments, and multiple choice questions for the fourth quarter.

How did they perform on the fourth quarter assessments?

They performed very well. They are giving their own answers orally because on Zoom classes they could look at their books.

Are the parents sitting with the child during class?

Not all, but some of them, especially parents of students in Play Group to Class 1.

Are you receiving their homework on Google Classroom?

No, by email.



How are you taking their tests and exams?

It is very difficult, taking tests online. Last term, we had a question paper we shared on the screen. They have their time limit and they have to email us the answers within 25 to 30 minutes. After the time limit, we will not take their answer paper. Although, we cannot do anything about the fact that some of their parents are next to them during tests. The monitors are telling them to not speak during the tests but they don't listen or turn off their cameras. Parents sitting beside them also help. So, this time, we are taking oral tests.

Have you noticed any cheating between students?

No, but they are being helped by parents or siblings. Sometimes, their scanned answers make it obvious that this is not their handwriting or writing style. It's very easy for them to cheat.

Are some of them doing their own work?

Yes, most of them do it themselves. The students who send work done by their parents are those who don't attend the class, saying these are not usual classes and the classes are not good.

So, is it one item per class? Such as one comprehension or composition item per class?

One item per class, as I take 3 classes per week.

Is there any way to include listening?

They do practice listening in English Illustration club – they see movies. They also watch movies in science club to help with their projects. We also had a science fair where they spoke on their projects one by one.

How many tests do you take per term?

We have 2 exams – first term and final term. We have 2 to 4 tests and quizzes per quarterly term.

How are the marks distributed?

We changed the marks and reduced the grades. I can send you the distribution later, I don't have it with me now.

Do you give feedback on test scripts?

Yes, for each and every student. I send feedback via email. Sometimes, if I find common mistakes, I will discuss it in the next class.

How is managing an online class different from a traditional one?

It is really difficult, especially with checking scripts online. The pictures are blurry which makes understanding their handwriting worse, especially when I have to check grammatical and comprehension mistakes so I have to wait for the next class to discuss it with them. Sometimes, we are not free to explain all of their mistakes because their parents or other people are sitting beside them and they take pictures of the screen and record the class. The worst thing is, sometimes if they find a mistake, they send it to corporate. And we cannot have an actual assessment in this way or an actual class in this circumstance.

Do you check according to the usual standard?

No, we are in a tough situation so we grade leniently. We have nothing to do.

Was any training provided to you before conducting the classes?

Yes, we had corporate and senior teachers how us how to take Zoom class. Each day, we had a meeting after class. We had classes from 9 to 2, and then we had to attend a meeting. Before, we had classes from 8 to 2 and that was it but now they call whenever and ask us to join a meeting.

Would it be easier if we had any software to check scripts?

Yes, it would be really good. But now there are benefits such as sharing screens.

Did you not have projectors?

We did, but then we had to turn it on and find the movie and so on.

Any other challenges?

I am not satisfied taking class this way. Those who are really good students understand the class and respond. But those who cheating all the time don't talk and don't turn on their cameras. In school, I can go up to them ask them why they aren't doing their work. But now I can't so I don't have the satisfaction after taking a class that they have done the class and learned a lot. So it is difficult to assess them.

Do you have any alternative assessment?

Yes, class work is marked and we have oral quizzes and end of chapter quizzes.

What are the benefits?

They attend the classes and learn as opposed to school being shut down. Those who are regular they know what the syllabus is, they go through their textbooks and take their exams so they are benefitting from their ongoing education.

And do you think these online classroom practices will be kept after schools are reopened?

Yes, I think Zoom classes should be continued if teachers can't go to school then they can take it from home. Or during other political issues close our school for 2-3 days, we can continue classes. Also, we should continue giving projects and homework.

What do you do during WiFi interruptions?

I have a monitor who also attends the class. If I am disconnected for a few minutes, she takes over and manages the class until I am back. Sometimes, we have two monitors so that their class can continue.

## **Transcript of Interview with T2**

Q: Which classes do you take?

A: English Literature for Standard 2, 3 and 4.

How long have the classes been online?

Ever since the first lockdown.

How did you assess the students?

We took the tests on Google Form before shifting to Google Classroom.

What was the question pattern?

Short questions and MCQs, no broad questions like we took in physical classes.

Has the syllabus changed?

No, although the syllabus is broad we have to accommodate 2 classes instead of 1 to complete it.

Has the duration changed?

It was 45 minutes, now only 40 minutes.

The platform of the class is?

Zoom.

Do you use any other apps?

Yes, the assignments and grading and materials are shared on Google Classroom.

Are recorded lectures provided?

No, we don't to encourage attending the live classes. However, we do have demo classes. These are compulsory for the teachers. After the class time, teachers log in with their ID and share ideas about how teachers from other campuses are taking online classes. It is a kind of a training.

Do you assess students during class?

They take pictures of their work during class and share them.

Are they eager to participate in class as before COVID?

Yes, they are very curious to read through the chapters.

Is the attendance rate good?

Yes, but there are issues such as them running off the camera or microphone, and background noise.

Do they have homework?

Yes, marked homework.

How are tests and exams taken?

That's also on Google Classroom.

Are they monitored over Zoom?

Yes, for example, they took the midterm test on one ID and logged in to another Zoom ID where the monitors is logged in at all times.

Is this an English Medium school?

Yes.

Do they have classes for speaking and listening?

Yes, we also allot marks for recitation and handwriting.

Do they submit any projects?

Yes, they have essay competitions.

Has the difficulty level of tests been reduced?

In a way as I set more MCQ questions instead of broad questions so that's an easy way to earn marks.

What about the grading policy?

The students are graded on a scale of 1-9 according to British Council policy. They are rated on 15 criteria such as handwriting, participation, bringing books on time, dress code, helping out classmates, extracurricular activities etc.

How is the mark distribution?

Mark distribution has not changed. They get 20 marks on tests, 10 on homework.

How are tests taken?

We have time limit set on Google Form exams.

How much of the total grade does the final exam carry?

80 marks out of 100.

Will that not put a lot of pressure on the students?

Well, our syllabus will be completed so they will have a lot of time for revision. And we are only taking one word/line answer questions or multiple choice questions so it is easy to earn marks. This is because the younger kids can't type too fast.

Do they receive A/B/D grades or Good/Satisfactory remarks?

Not A/B grades but they are scored on the 1-9 scale. Remarks are added by the chairperson.

Do the students get distracted a lot?

Yes, but not as much as in physical classes because they cannot communicate with each other or disturb others now.

What about distractions at home?

Yes, their younger siblings disturb them or their parents keep talking to them or feeding them during class.

Did you have any experience with online classes prior to COVID-19?

No, we had to take training before we started classes. For one month, parents could not join classes and we had to guide every parent so they could receive materials and take assessments.

Does everyone submit their homework on time?

Not everybody; I have to push them to do it.

Should it not be easier, as students don't have the problem of forgetting to bring their work?



I think it is about accountability. They don't have the fear of seeing the teacher face to face, of me asking who did not bring their work. They don't have that fear anymore.

Is the grading lenient?

It was initially to accommodate adjustment, but it has been a year so we are maintaining a strict standard.

What are some of the challenges you faced taking online classes?

It is very difficult to give them enough talk time. They cannot participate as much as before. They could raise their hands in the physical classes but not they don't wait, they unmute their microphone and it gets chaotic when too many students speak at once. They are supposed to raise the virtual hand on Zoom but they interrupt without doing so. There is one problem student who logs in to the class but never responds or turns on his camera. This student acts the same way in other subject classes. He will be losing marks in attendance.

In the case schools reopen, will any of these online practices continue?

Yes, it will be risky to discontinue this system totally. We were prepared to reopen schools partially but had decided to keep online classes ongoing.

How do you think the students are benefitted or disadvantaged?

It is too much screen time for them, and for us as well.

### **Transcript of Interview with T3**

Q: Which classes do you teach, and what subjects?

A: Did you have to reduce the syllabus?

Yes, the number and duration of classes had to be shortened so syllabus also had to be changed. In literature courses we cut down many stories and poems, and we tried to focus on topics which can serve the purpose of reading. For language course, the topics we taught in previous years that we wanted to review were omitted. So, the crucial things needed in basic writing in future years have been kept in the syllabus.

Are any textbooks/lecture materials provided online?

They have the physical textbooks, lecture materials are provided online. In physical classes, we had to make them use photocopies but now they each have a copy of the material, and we can access and share materials very quickly through screen share such as YouTube or PowerPoint slides. We would also share materials through Google Classroom.

Where do you take the classes?

We take the classes in Zoom, and they submit their work on Google Classroom. We also take the exams on Zoom.

How do they receive feedback on their assignments?

They are expert at using these now so we check the scripts and use comment box to provide feedback. In the next class, if they have queries they ask the questions and we clarify.

Do you think everyone reads these comments?

Well, the sincere students always wait for the teacher's feedback. But there are a few students who are not so serious; in that case, we knock them during the class time and ask them if they read the feedback or if they understood why we cut the marks.

Do you provide any recorded lectures?

No.

Do they have any individual participation?

Yes, if it is a literary text, we have to give an introduction. So they always have questions in the last few minutes of a class. Some days, I will not teach anything new, they will read and explain the text. In creative writing classes, they do group work. Currently, we are studying argumentative essay. I gave them the topic and they debated it for the group work. Whenever they write any good piece, we ask him or her to read out his or her work and get the critical appreciation from their peers.

How do they communicate in group work?

Well, they all have their own cell phones. They talked with each other and selected one spokesperson from each group.

What about the prospect of cheating?

Well, it is easy for them to do it. I leave it to them to be sincere and honest.

Would you say that they are more eager to participate in online classes?

They were more eager in physical classes. We did not know how long we would continue online classes for. The first few months they were eager to participate but now they are tired of online classes. The way they react tells me these online classes are imposed on them. Outside class, they can communicate and ask questions on our WhatsApp group. And I have to manage these groups as class teacher.

What else do you face as class teacher?

Sharing notices, whenever there is a notice we have promptly share it.

Last session we had four periods of each 40 minutes with 10 minutes break. This session, we have started 10 minute form class to make sure students join the next class. This is where we have a small prayer session and take attendance at the start of the day. Their day is from 8.50 am to 1.10 pm. 5 periods all together for senior classes, and 4 periods for junior classes. They also have a tiffin break for 20 minutes from 10.30 to 10.50 pm.

Is it tiring for them to stare at the screen?

Yes, they are energetic for the first four periods and get tired for the fifth. They also attend classes based on their priority, if there is a test for example. Sometimes, I get an attitude from them that nothing is meaningful due to the pandemic. Then I try to stop the lesson and discuss some lighter topics like sports. I try to reduce the pressure in that way.

Approving 20 students take up a few minutes. Things don't always go according to plan.

Has the question pattern been relaxed?

We used to have 4 surprise tests of 10 marks each and 3 class tests of 20 marks each. We had to reduce the number of tests and changed the question patter. In physical classes we

had broad questions and intense critical analysis of 10 marks. Now, the latter is of 5 marks and we have more MCQs and fill in the blank questions. Also, junior students (up to class 4) have class tests only where as senior students have surprise tests as well.

How do they submit their work?

They usually write and send pictures. Sometimes we ask them to type the answers.

Are the pictures always clear?

Sometimes they are blurry. I had to make two pairs of glasses to read the pictures of their assignments. I use my phone to check scripts and add comments as my laptop is not touch screen because I have to mark the script, find the mistakes and judge the script overall.

Do the students have distractions at home?

Yes, especially if they have siblings. I can see on camera that their attention is elsewhere.

Any other issues with online classes?

Yes, somehow some other people got the student's class link and ID and they join the class and leave strange comments.

How do you provide feedback?

Tests are discussed in class. Students take exams in ClassTunes, where they can see results of objective online tests immediately for up to 24 hours. Written tests are discussed in class based on queries.

What do you do in case of electricity/WiFi interruptions?

We are advised to have enough data on mobile to take the class. The students can take notes from their classmates. They are provided exam questions beforehand so that they can attend the exam smoothly and they are also advised to have enough data to submit their work. If they cannot manage to send it in time, they have to inform the subject or class teacher. So, as class teacher, I have to receive a lot of messages on issues not related to my subject. So work from home feels like a nightmare sometimes.

Has the mark distribution changed?

Yes, we have four quarterly assessments and two hall exams – half yearly and final term. In the last term, hall exams were taken out of 40 marks instead of 100 and convert it to 100%. We used to have 50 marks for dress code, proper conduct, participation and so on. They receive their grades and report card on ClassTunes app. The parents have access to their results as well.

Did you receive any training before conducting online classes?

Yes, for ClassTunes app their material developer gave us training. My students also helped me a lot and discussed my issues with the apps regarding setting time limits.

Do they like their English classes over other subjects?

Well, we do have scope for free talk whereas in science classes they have to follow the content strictly.

Do you provide any material in Bangladeshi context?

Not for their assessments, but for free discussions.

Do you have any materials for practicing listening skills?

I did not have the opportunity for playing audio before the pandemic but now I can share my screen and show them poetry performances on YouTube.

Has writing practice has been reduced?

Yes, as they have less broad answer questions.

If schools reopen, will any of these online practices remain?

Yes, some can be continued such as if a student is absent for a long time, he or she can submit her work online. Presenting material through sharing the screen is also useful.

Do you think online education will be beneficial or harmful for students in the long run?

In a way it is beneficial but also harmful when they switch tabs during class. It depends on the student. Some students are addicted to online gaming so they are exposed to a lot of screen time, probably making their eyesight weaker.

## **Transcript of Interview with T4**

Q: Which classes do you teach, and what subjects?

A: I teach grade 7 and 8. I teach English language, literature and creative writing.

Has the syllabus content changed from before the pandemic?

No, but we reduced some grammatical aspects. When we take exams, we reduce number of topics per exam but syllabus is same.

Are the tests of same duration?

No, they get less time. They are supposed to get 20 minutes – we make objective questions on Google Form where they tick the answers in 10 minutes. For class tests they used to get 40 minutes, now they get 30 minutes. Final exams are for 1 hour instead of 2.

Does the test include broad questions?

Yes.

Did you reduce the number of stories or poems in literature syllabus?

Yes, we reduced from 4 to 1 poem, number of stories is same.

Do you take classes on Zoom?

Yes, previously we took classes on ClassTune but now we have shifted to Zoom.

How is Zoom better suited?

We faced many glitches in ClassTune. Taking attendance was difficult as students took more time to log in. Zoom is more flexible for conducting classes.



Do you provide any recorded lectures?

No.

How often do students get to participate in class individually?

Not in every class due to shortage of time but I can understand by their expression whether they understood the lecture or not. On that basis, I ask the weak or confused students if they understood and then I assign them extra task for practice.

Has the question pattern changed?

If I remove a broad question, I add 5 short question or objective questions instead.

Is the class time 40 minutes?

Yes, but I ask them to stay for extra time if I need to explain a concept. They have a 10 minute break before the next class so they can stay back for 5 minutes.

Has there been a decline in their eagerness to participate?

Initially, there were energetic and excited about starting online classes. But now they are not feeling very motivated, and they feel bored. I am trying to make the classes more student centered.

Have you ever included any authentic material?

Yes, sometimes I use Google Map and use localized examples from our context. I don't really have the chance to use authentic material from outside the syllabus but sometimes we use magazines and newspapers as materials.

How do you provide feedback?

I use a chrome extension to include voice notes and comments like Mote and Kami to edit and check their scripts. So they can hear the feedback orally.

Of the four skills in English, do the student get to practice speaking and listening?

Yes, they get to speak in two groups by debating argumentative essays orally. For listening, I try to show them YouTube videos for example the documentation of a story for literature class. I also introduce topics through videos on YouTube so they listen to that.

Has the grading policy changed?

No, it is the same. However, we are concerned about spelling and vocabulary although we are not that strict about checking.

Has the mark distribution changed?

We take exams out of 40 marks and convert it to 100%. I can't tell you about the percentage of the final exam as it has not been confirmed by authority yet. Every quarter result contributes to the overall grade.

Is there any group work?

Yes, on Zoom.

How do they submit written work in groups?

They can talk as they write and each of them submit their own work or share their idea with me in the class. Or if I give 5 questions and make 5 groups of 5 students each, each group shares one answer and then I give feedback the group.

How do you deal with students' distraction?

If they seem bored, I stop the lecture for 5 minutes and discuss something else to draw back their attention. As they are inquisitive and curious, they show their interest when we discuss other topics such as science, politics, COVID etc.

Have you ever assigned a task regarding the pandemic?

No, we discuss examples related to COVID such as in making sentences but no written work.

How do you deal with cheating?

Well they keep their camera on during tests so it is easy to know when they are cheating or taking help. In the classroom, I would walk around the room and ask them to change their seats. But now, what I can do is asking them to keep their microphone and cameras on. I also warn them that if I see more than 30% plagiarism, I will deduct marks.

Have you received any training?

Yes, I have always been interested in using technology for teaching so I was already familiar with these apps. We also received training on assigning work, checking scripts, giving feedback and so on.

Has the number of classes changed?

They used to have 7 periods each of 35 minutes duration a day with no breaks and now they have 5 periods of 40 minutes with 10 minute breaks.

If schools reopen, will any of the online policies remain?

It depends on the situation, and if school reopens they should maintain fully physical classrooms as per WHO guidelines.

Is online learning beneficial or harmful for these students?

They are spending a lot of time on a screen but they are learning something new such as leaning with technology. They are modernizing themselves, and Zoom has a broader scope in sharing materials from the internet. As opposed to waiting for schools to be opened safely, continuing their learning is important. Another loss is where I cannot see their expression face to face in order to understand if they are clear on a topic or not. In physical classes they ask questions more readily as well, and I can pay individual attention to a student who needs help.

## **Transcript of Interview with T5**

Q: Which class do you teach?

A: KG to class 7.

Has the syllabus changed?

Yes it has been shortened to make things easier for the students.

How are worksheets provided to them?

Students have the books which they study. Additionally, we provide worksheets where they do the main classwork. In this way they will have all the notes that are done in class. They are also provided with a homework and solution sheet

Where do you take their classes?

Zoom.

Do you provide recorded lectures?

No but we maintain Google Classroom materials strictly.

How do you assess the students during the class?

They solve worksheets every class.

Do they get to speak individually?

Yes they are very enthusiastic.

So then they are eager to participate?

Yes. Well, the junior classes are eager but senior classes are shy to turn on their cameras.

How is their attendance rate?

Very good.

How are class work and home work checked?

They submit worksheets every month and sit for monthly tests.

Is there any scope for cheating?

Yes, it's very easy to cheat online. But we try to take viva instead of written exams to avoid cheating.

Is the test difficulty level the same or has it been relaxed?

Slightly relaxed so that I can grade each student fairly.

Did you change the grading policy?

It's more lenient. We try to give as much marks as possible.

How do you elicit participation?

I encourage them and tell them they are doing good.

Do they get distracted in class?

Junior students do as they talk too much in class. Senior students are more cooperative.

Do you give them feedback?

Yes, we discuss tests in class.

What are some of the struggles with online teaching?

It's pretty hard to interact with the students. Most of the time the cameras are off so it's very difficult as a teacher to understand whether they're actually understanding or not but it's really saddening that we didn't get to see our students in real life even after teaching them for a whole year.

What do they do in case of WiFi interruptions?

I usually ask them to have backup mobile data but most of them do not have it but they do login through another device.

Did you receive any training?

No, I started teaching during COVID so it was easy for me to adapt.

Will students have difficulty returning to school?

They will definitely have difficulties as they will have to wake up early and cannot do classes laying in bed. They will have to follow a strict discipline which I think is for their betterment.

## APPENDIX E

### Interview Transcripts for Students

#### **Transcript of Interview with S1**

Q: Which class are you in?

A: Six.

How are your English classes?

They are good.

Do you get to speak individually in class?

Yes.

Everyday?

Yes, the teacher is constantly asking questions and are always free to help. Whenever I have a question they immediately answer.

Do you practice English at home?

Yes.

How.

Reading books.

What kind of books?

Harry Potter.

Do you need subtitles for movies?



No.

Which app do you use for classes?

Google Meet, but we used Zoom before.

Which do you prefer??

Google meet.

Why?

You can't change the name and also there are some naughty students who use fake IDs to join Zoom class and they keep chatting privately. They don't pay attention. Google Meet has a public chat box so they can't chat there.

Any other apps

Google classroom and Google Drive.

Any trouble using these applications?

Initially but my teachers helped me figure it out.

How do you submit your homework?

On Google Classroom.

Do you send pictures or PDF?

It is optional but I prefer PDF.

How do your receive feedback?

Classroom comments or comments on assignment or in class

How did you get feedback before the pandemic?

I don't remember

Did you go up to the teacher?

Can you understand what your teacher is saying?

Yes, if not, I ask questions.

What is different with online classes?

We don't meet, no eye contact, if we have a question we don't get called to the board to explain a problem so explaining my problem is difficult

How do you work on your worksheets?

I use a tablet.

Is it stressful for your eyes?

Sometimes I get headaches but mostly I am comfortable with it.

How many classes do you have per day?

Five.

Before the pandemic?

Seven.

How long do your classes go on for? 40 before Ramadan, 30 now.

Do you have to take notes?

I don't usually take notes. Did you take notes before the pandemic?

No.

Do you get any recorded lectures?

No.

Do you prefer online or traditional classes?

Traditional.

Why is that?

It's a lot more fun that way. There's a scope for learning better as the teacher writes on the board.

Do you get distracted?

Yes, when the class is boring.

How do you sit for exams?

We just join google meet as there is no limited timing. We use blank sheets and our cameras are always on. The invigilator is there as always.

Do you have to submit any work typed?

No.

Are you nervous about internet interruptions during exams?

Sometimes but our exam questions are given early so we can download it before the exam starts. We keep writing on the downloaded file until our internet comes back on.

Do you think you are practicing English more or less?

Same amount.

Do you have composition and comprehension?

Yes.

Do you want schools to be reopened?

Yes, I am fed up with online classes. I am bored and it's just not the same. I am waiting for school to open. It's more fun when you have friends nearby.

Did you have group work?

We did before the pandemic but not anymore. Only the cousins and siblings in the same class do group works.

## **Transcript of Interview with S2**

Q: Which class are you in?

A: Class 1.

What kind of questions do you solve?

Fill in the blanks, true/false, identify the statement.

How do you view your worksheets?

Miss shares her screen, we just write the answers or the questions along with the answers.

Do you prefer online classes or going to school?

Going to school.

Why?

I get to meet my friends.

Where are your classes conducted?

On Zoom.

Do you understand everything your teacher is saying?

Yes.

Do you need to study anything before class?

No.

How many classes per day do you have?

Sometimes 4, sometimes 5.

What is the duration of your classes?

I'm not sure, I will have to check my routine.

What do you study in literature class?

We have poems on Thursdays. The story is a bit long so we read a bit for a day solve a practice sheet before the test.

Do you have tests online?

Online.

How do you take these tests?

We solve questions by seeing the book or the practice sheet is shared on the screen.

Do you have to take notes?

No but we have to write about the homework in the diary.

Do you like doing classes online?

Not much.

Do you feel nervous during tests?

Yes.

Why?

I am nervous of making mistakes based on what I studied.

Did you not feel nervous when you took tests at school?

No.

### **Transcript of Interview with S3**

Q: Which class are you in?

A: 4.

Do you get to speak individually?

Yes, but not in every class.

What is the duration of your class?

35 minutes.

Do you like learning English?

Yes.

Why do you like learning English?

I can read books in English.

Do you prefer online classes or classes at school?

Class at school.

Why?

I can see the teacher face-to-face and play with my friends.

How do you sit for your class tests?

On Zoom, but initially monthly tests were taken on Google Forms.

Can you understand everything the teacher is saying?



Yes.

Would you have trouble going back to school now?

It would feel sudden.

Do you have any issues with online classes?

No.

Do you have any classes for speaking and listening?

No.

## **Transcript of Interview with S4**

Q: Where do you have your classes?

A: Zoom.

Do you practice English outside class?

No.

Are the lectures effective?

Sometimes yes. Sometimes it is not effective because I can't ask the teachers questions even if I don't understand due to time being limited.

Do you like studying online materials?

Yes.

Do you like solving worksheets at home?

Yes but sometimes the questions are hard and I can't solve them by myself and getting feedback is not possible online.

Did you need help from your parents with technology?

Initially, yes, but not anymore.

Is it difficult to sit in front of a screen for the length of your classes?

No but I get distracted easily.

Is it difficult to look at the screen for the length of your classes?

Yes. Since I wear glasses sometimes my eyes get tired.

Do you have to take notes during class?

Yes but it is not difficult as the teacher gives us time to copy the notes. But when the picture quality is not good I struggle.

Do you prefer online classes or traditional classes?

Traditional.

Why?

I can ask questions if I don't understand something. I can meet and play with my friends too.

Did you feel better focused at school?

Yes.

How?

There are less distractions at school. When I attend classes on a phone I get easily distracted by game notifications.

Are you used to learning online?

Yes.

Will it be difficult to return to school?

It will be difficult to wake up so early in the morning at first but it will be easier to attend classes in person.

Are you nervous when taking tests or do you have any fears during exams?

No, I am not nervous because I always study before the exams. But I fear the WiFi or electricity will go out. The few times that happened I couldn't give make up tests because my teacher would not take them. So my average marks went down. Another fear is running out of time to finish the exams. Most of the exams are taken on Google Forms and there is no option to save answers there so if I accidentally exit or close the page or press submit my answers are lost.

## **Transcript of Interview with S5**

Q: So, which class are you in?

A: Class 1.

What do you study in your English class?

Alphabet, jumbled letters, spelling, fill in the blank, word meaning and rhymes.

Where do you attend class?

On Zoom.

How do you submit your work?

By taking pictures and sending them to the teacher.

Do you have any recorded lectures?

We did last year but now we have live classes only.

Do you need to take notes during the class?

Yes we copy notes or take screenshots.

Do you get to speak in class?

Yes, when the teacher asks me a question.

How long are your classes?

35 minutes.

Do you like online classes?

No.

Would you prefer to go back to school?

Yes.

Why?

I can play with my friends.

## Appendix F

### Parents' Survey Results

#### **P1's Survey Results**

1. How are students coping with online classes? Is it taking a toll on their mental or physical health?

She has to sit in front of a screen for a long time, like 3-4 hours, - it's a stress on her eyes.

I think she has trouble understanding the class.

2. Has their attitude towards school work, class changed? How?

No, she has interest in doing class.

3. Have you had to help them with devices/applications regularly? How often?

Only in the beginning, but not anymore.

4. Are they motivated to learn?

Yes.

5. Do they hesitate to participate in class? If so, why?

No, not that much.

6. Do they spend more time studying at home?

Same as before.

7. What are some of their struggles with online learning?

Sending homework at first but now she can do it herself. Sometimes she has trouble writing answers or taking notes in time but she can watch the recorded lectures again and finish taking notes.

8. What effect is online learning having on their education? Are their English skills affected, with less or more practice on reading/writing/speaking/listening? If so, how?

I think it is difficult to understand the online class. And they get tired sitting for class for 3 to 4 hours. She is not really struggling with English.

9. How confident are they in general with their English skills outside the class?

She is confident, she likes to participate readily.

10. Do they struggle with homework, projects?

No.

11. Do they ask for help with English vocabulary, sentence construction and such exercises?

Yes, I try to help her practice at home.

12. Will their return to school be difficult? Why or why not?

Depends on COVID situation. If schools open it will be better for them, but only if COVID situation improves.



## **P2's Survey Results**

1. How are students coping with online classes? Is it taking a toll on their mental or physical health?

They are coping as they can. They don't like to sit in one place for so long.

2. Has their attitude towards school work, class changed? How?

My youngest does not like online classes very much, he has two classes per day of 90 minutes each and he only wants to do one class. He likes to participate and the students raise hands through a function on Zoom so if he doesn't get picked he gets disheartened.

3. Have you had to help them with devices/applications regularly? How often?

Only in the beginning, now they can log in to Zoom and send their homework on WhatsApp by themselves.

4. Are they motivated to learn?

Yes, they know they have to learn online since schools are closed.

5. Do they hesitate to participate in class? If so, why?

No, they don't hesitate.

6. Do they spend more time studying at home?

No.

7. What are some of their struggles with online learning?

If they don't understand something they can ask questions but they don't want to interrupt during the class.

8. What effect is online learning having on their education? Are their English skills affected, with less or more practice on reading/writing/speaking/listening? If so, how?

No, they study and do their homework properly.

9. How confident are they in general with their English skills outside the class?

Their English is good but they don't really practice at home.

10. Do they struggle with homework, projects?

No, I help them with projects if it is necessary.

11. Do they ask for help with English vocabulary, sentence construction and such exercises?

Only the youngest, he is in K.G., when he is doing homework.

12. Will their return to school be difficult? Why or why not?

It might be difficult because of health concerns and maintaining safety guidelines. They want to go to school. My youngest wears his school uniform and won't attend class without it. But if schools open, they will get used to it.

### **P3's Survey Results**

1. How are students coping with online classes? Is it taking a toll on their mental or physical health?

At first my son was having trouble adjusting to online classes because the technology and interface was new. And also he has short attention span he wasn't be able to focus very well. He's now used to online classes and is doing quite well.

2. Has their attitude towards school work, class changed? How?

I feel like my child's interest in learning has been impacted a lot due to online classes. He doesn't seem as motivated to attend the classes. He misses some classes and says he will just watch the recordings or read the notes provided but that isn't the same as attending classes in person.

3. Have you had to help them with devices/applications regularly? How?

At first I needed to show him the ropes, check his mail and routine and help him log in to classes. But after the first few times he got the hang of it.

4. Are they motivated to learn?

Not as much as he used to be before. Maybe he finds online classes mechanical or boring. Or maybe it's the lack of proper feedback from teachers. I feel like he's not learning as much as he used to before.

5. Do they hesitate to participate in class? If so, why?

Yes. Maybe there's a fear of judgement. Or shyness.

6. Do they spend more time studying at home?

Yes. The teachers assign more homework now and he has to do a lot more self-study to keep up with the content since class timings are short. He's also not able to attend coaching now so he has to study all by himself.

7. What are some of their struggles?

He is missing out on proper feedback and guidance from teachers. If he gets stuck on a question he needs to mail teachers and then wait for a reply and sometimes teachers don't even reply. Since I am a working mother I'm not always able to help out with his homework.

8. What effect is online learning having on their education? Are their English skills affected, with less or more practice on reading/writing/speaking/listening? If so, how?

Education is a little stilted online. Sometimes wifi or electricity issues make it impossible to attend classes peacefully. My child was never very interested in reading or developing English skills and now he has even more excuses to avoid books. He doesn't get to practice conversing in English too so his speaking and listening skills are not developing either.

9. How confident are they in general with their English skills outside the class?

Not very confident- I don't hear him speaking English all that much, except with his cousins who live abroad and come visit during holidays. His shyness may be due to changing schools often. He used to be in an English medium school before but we changed to an English version school because it is closer to home and is more reputable.

10. Do they struggle with homework, projects?

Yes sometimes. He tries to do everything by himself but sometimes needs my help, especially with maths.

11. Do they ask help with English vocabulary, sentence construction and such exercises?

Yes, a few times. Since I am quite busy with my job and I do not have a solid English background, I can't help him out all the time. I then have to ask my niece to help him out when he gets stuck

12. Will their return to school be difficult? Why or why not?

It will not be difficult. The teachers will be there to help them out. Besides, I think children learn better together. And with less distractions around them, like computers and toys and TVs. So I think in-person school would be better for the children, if safety precautions are maintained properly.

## **P4's Survey Results**

1. How are students coping with online classes? Is it taking a toll on their mental or physical health?

They are coping well. Initially there were some difficulties in managing / joining individual classes through Google Classroom or Zoom, but now they are accustomed.

Online classes are definitely having a toll, since they are continuously hooked to the screens, mostly small screens, and it is affecting both their mental and physical well-being. Mentally, they are sometimes acting irritated/annoyed, and also addiction to screen-time is increasing and difficult to manage.

Physically it is affecting their eye-sight, with most common complaints being near-sightedness, redness and swelling of eye, pain in eyes and also headache.

2. Has their attitude towards school work, class changed? How?

Previously they enjoyed going to school and specially there were other activities / extra-curriculars / physical interactions with friends. But now in online classes, they sometimes have tendency to skip classes and the interest level seems low. This is also affected by poor internet connectivity at times. Continuous screen-viewing can also become monotonous at times and they feel bored.

3. Have you had to help them with devices/applications regularly? How?

Initially yes, we had to help with joining Zoom and/or submitting classwork/homework on Google classroom, but they adapted quickly and now do not need any support.

4. Are they motivated to learn?

Yes, motivation is there.

5. Do they hesitate to participate in class? If so, why?

No

6. Do they spend more time studying at home?

No

7. What are some of their struggles?

Poor internet connectivity, small screen viewing unhealthy for their eyes and physical health, missing their friends, missing socialization, missing extra-curricular activities of school.



8. What effect is online learning having on their education? Are their English skills affected, with less or more practice on reading/writing/speaking/listening? If so, how?

Some subjects are better understood / explained in face-to-face teaching, sometimes challenging to explain/understand online, for eg Science / Maths. For English, normally they had lot of interactive practice work in both spoken and written English, but this is obviously minimized in online classes.

9. How confident are they in general with their English skills outside the class?

In general, they are confident.

10. Do they struggle with homework, projects?

In lower classes, sometimes they struggle, perhaps they could not follow properly in online format.

11. Do they ask help with English vocabulary, sentence construction and such exercises?

For my son in Class 1, sometimes he needs help with his homework.

12. Will their return to school be difficult? Why or why not?

I don't see any difficulty on their return to school other than the COVID situation and perhaps worse traffic condition of Dhaka city. Initially some children may take some time to adapt to the physical presence/interactions in school, but it will be definitely good for them.

## **P5's Survey Results**

1. How are students coping with online classes? Is it taking a toll on their mental or physical health?

I think students cope with virtual classes pretty well because they are habituated with devices.

Initially it was interesting for them but gradually they feel less interest because I think the classroom interaction with teachers and friends are both missing.

Obviously I think it's a mental and physical hazard for anyone, student or teacher to continue virtual classes for long time.

2. Has their attitude towards school work, class changed? How?

One common complaint we get as a teacher from students regarding not to complete their class or school work or even exam that they have network issue it may be a lame excuse but some of them are really facing this problem a lot which causes less interest.

3. Have you had to help them with devices/applications regularly? How often?

Not exactly because most of the time I had learned from them.

4. Are they motivated to learn?

Actually students always need motivation to learn whatever they are in real or virtual class. As a living being we all have the ability to change ourselves in a different situation which is called adaptation power to survive. Most of the students

actually know somehow they need to continue their study in this COVID situation although it is not a comfortable way to learn.

5. Do they hesitate to participate in class? If so, why?

Some of the students hesitate. The reason behind this may be device issue or network issue or personal problem. It happens in real life also. Some of the students are not comfortable in the class all the time and each of them have different issues but most commonly lack of concentration towards study is the main reason.

6. Do they spend more time studying at home?

If we considered as a whole, the time students are spending for their study at home is not enough nowadays because they are more busy with their devices and parents are allowing them because all of the educational material is in their device now.

7. What are some of their struggles with online learning?

Struggles actually means a lot. Students need a normal life to learn and to prepare them for future, so I think to have a normal school and family life is the main struggle now.

8. What effect is online learning having on their education? Are their English skills affected, with less or more practice on reading/writing/speaking/listening? If so, how?

Online classes have so many positive and negative effect as well all subject skills are affected the same way. Lack of real life interactive classes are the main reason for this.

9. How confident are they in general with their English skills outside the class?

It depends on person to person. As English Medium students most of them are confident with their English skill according to their level.

10. Do they struggle with homework, projects?

Not exactly. Because nowadays they have more communicating opportunities with their teachers and friends.

11. Do they ask for help with English vocabulary, sentence construction and such exercises?

Sometimes they ask but not in a remarkable way.

12. Will their return to school be difficult? Why or why not?

In my opinion yes it will be difficult because we need to think of their safety first and so many issues come with this.