

**Alternative Assessment to Reduce Negative Backwash Effect: Exploring the Aspects
Hindering the Successful Implementation of Alternative Assessments**

By

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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.

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Ethics Statement

I maintained research ethics throughout the study. The methodology section discusses ethical consideration in detail.

Abstract

Alternative Assessment (AA) is highly regarded worldwide because of its significance in developing the necessary skills of the learners along with making teaching and learning more authentic. Recently, in Bangladesh, AA has been inaugurated as the new assessment method at the secondary level of education which has developed different points of views among teachers and guardians. This study explored the status of AA as a newly implemented assessment system for secondary-level education. The study aimed to look at AA's role in reducing the negative backwash effect of examinations. Furthermore, it investigated issues that are acting as obstacles to the successful implementation of AA. This study adopted a qualitative method of data collection and analysis. For the study, I used semi-structured interviews where the participants were secondary-level school teachers. I also used a focus group discussion with the parents of the students. The data was analyzed using the thematic data analysis method. The result of the study showed that the majority of the teachers have a positive attitude towards AA and they appreciate it. They agreed on the fact that AA can reduce backwash effects and make learning active and interesting. Many teachers are not ready due to the poor pay scale, lack of feedback on training, lack of resources, lack of adaptive mindset, and so on. The teachers suggested working on these issues for the successful implementation of AA. On the other hand, the majority of the parents did not have a positive attitude towards it. They believe that AA is a great initiative but it's more appropriate for higher levels of education and due to the implementation of AA, secondary-level students are not taking their studies seriously. The current study is significant in developing teaching strategy and filling the gaps of knowledge regarding the implementation of AA at the secondary level of education.

Dedication

I would like to dedicate my work to my parents.

Acknowledgement

At first, I want to thank Allah (SWT), The Almighty for making me able to pursue my dreams. I cannot thank my parents enough to always support me to dream better. I am extremely thankful to my supervisor Asifa Sultana, PhD ma'am for providing me with all the feedbacks to make my study successful. Without her help and support I would have never completed my study. I am grateful to all the faculty members who helped me to broaden the horizon of my knowledge. Last but not the least; I am thankful to my friends for always being supportive.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

In the course of learning, assessment is a vital part that not only shows the progress of a learner but also determines the different needs of a learner for successful learning. Assessment is done to identify the outcome of teaching. It depicts the overall learning of a student. Along with that, it reflects on the progress of the students, their needs, gaps, the relationship between teacher and learner and many other aspects. The exam-based traditional assessment shows what students performed in the exams rather than what they learned. Their skill development, learning gaps and areas of interest, and so on are rarely assessed through traditional assessments. In traditional assessment, students learn from what the teacher teaches them. Mostly they learn by memorization which allows them to know about a topic rather than connecting it to real life and acquire real-life skills. However, assessments should engage students in active learning not just pressure them to learn for exams (Quansah, 2018).

In recent years, there have been significant changes in the assessment process and methods. The need to acquire real-life skills through learning has gotten more attention rather than learning by heart. The curriculum and assessment system evolved around this need. For this reason, alternative assessment has become significantly popular in recent years. Assessment including formative assessment, different game and project-based assessments, presentation, and performances, and so on allows the learners to acquire different real-life interpersonal and intrapersonal skills (Islam & Ahmed, 2018). It also allows them to nurture their creativity. Students can engage with their teachers through active and collaborative learning which allows them to express themselves better. In addition, alternative assessments reduce the pressure of

written examinations and assess students' performance by engaging them in different activity-based assessments. Hence, alternative assessment develops different skills of the learners.

Recently a significant change has taken place in the curriculum and assessment system in secondary level education in Bangladesh. The new curriculum that was introduced in 2023 promotes playful learning where students will be assessed based on their performance (Billah, 2021). Thus the entire assessment system became alternative assessment oriented where there will no longer be lengthy written exams. Rather students are going to be assessed through continuous assessment, classroom-based, and other activity-based assessments which will develop the learners' skills (Billah, 2021). Students will be graded based on their performance. The goal of the curriculum is to assess students' development from regular in-class assessments by promoting action-based learning that is determined by the National Curriculum Framework, 2021 (Arpa, 2024). Students will get triangles, squares and circles as their grades and teachers are instructed to provide extra attention to the students to get the required grade.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Being a new phenomenon in Bangladesh the significance of alternative assessment is yet to be explored. There have been many attempts to implement continuous assessment, school-based assessments and so on (Uddin, 2010). However, the implementations were never appropriate enough to attain the anticipated goal. The aim of shifting the focus to final exam-based assessment where students will go through a continuous assessment to minimize the pressure of exams, the system always went back to the traditional aspect of testing. The traditional exam-based assessment grows fear among the students of doing well in the exams, hampers the learning process of the students (Podder, 2020). On the other hand, alternative assessment allows the students to always be in the process and enables them to develop their

skills through active participation. This is how the fear of institutions and exams becomes less prominent in students' minds. However, there are a lot of aspects that hinder the application of alternative assessment. Several contradictory thoughts of different stakeholders became a cause of unsuccessful implementation for many years. Nevertheless, the new curriculum added AA as the assessment system regardless of the issues.

1.3 Central Research Objectives

This study aims to explore the present status of AA at the secondary level to see how it is being adapted and implemented. Along with that, this research also aims to find out if the implementation of AA can reduce negative backwash effects which was a major drawback of traditional assessment as students were more focused on doing well in the exam and lost the excitement of learning. In addition, this study also investigates issues that are hindering the implementation of AA along with the solutions to those issues.

1.4 Research Questions

The research questions of the study are:

1. What is the current situation of AA at secondary level education?
2. Can AA be beneficial to reduce the backwash effect?
3. What perceptions do the teachers and parents have on AA?
4. What steps can be taken for the successful implementation of AA?

1.5 Scope of the Study

This study is conducted on the implementation of AA at the secondary level, issues that are hindering its implementation, and the possible solutions to those issues.

The amount of research in this field is limited and also not updated. This study can become a resource for future studies. The research design can also be used in other qualitative studies conducted on similar topics. The data collection tools, data processing, and data analysis can also become helpful for future studies. The results of the study can also bridge the gap in knowledge in this field.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study plays a significant role in developing knowledge about AA. There is very limited work on the implementation of AA at different levels of education. Studies on the implementation of it in secondary-level education in an ESOL context like in Bangladesh are rare. This study will help to fill the gap of knowledge and develop knowledge on pedagogy.

This study interviewed teachers of secondary-level education and conducted a focused group discussion with the parents of the students. By doing so, this study has portrayed the perceptions of both the teachers and parents. This study searches for different issues that have become obstacles to the successful implementation of AA. In this study, the solutions to the problems are also discussed from the suggestions of teachers and guardians. This study is a resourceful work that may help future studies in this field.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Introduction

The primary focus of this paper is to discuss the newly implemented AA at secondary level of education along with its role in reducing backwash effect to make teaching and learning more enjoyable. By looking at the aspects that are hindering the successful implementation of AA at the secondary level of education, this paper also aims to look for solutions to those issues. For this reason, in this chapter related scholarly works are reviewed. There are seven themes based on which the scholarly studies are discussed. After discussing these related works, I determined the gap in the literature that is discussed as the research gap.

2.1 Assessment: Different Types and Concepts of Assessment

When it comes to the education field, assessments and tests bear slightly different ideas. While tests are considered as a single-time measurement type obtained from a single pen and paper-based or computer administrated or online exams, assessment refers to a measure that occurs multiple times in a single grading period (Kubiszyn, 2024). Nasab (2015) defined assessment as an informal way of gathering information about students' knowledge and learning process through different ways at different times and contexts. However, in Kubiszyn's opinion (2024) tests and assessments are synonymous. Learning and assessment are closely related as assessment reveals the degree of knowledge that a learner acquires in the process of learning.

The classification of assessment is done based on various aspects. Classroom assessment has different types. Among them, three major types are diagnostic, formative, and summative assessment. There are other types of assessments such as norm-referenced assessment and Ipsative assessment. Regardless of the different types of assessment, scholars believe that all the

assessments follow any of the three approaches which are: assessment for learning, assessment as learning and assessment of learning (Ramadan, 2022). The purposes of the assessments circle these three approaches.

Assessment for learning serves the purpose of improving both teaching and learning. It involves both teachers and students while teaching. In this process, teachers gather information about students' current knowledge, skills, ideas about topics, misconceptions and so on. It assesses the quality of teaching and learning and works as evidence by facilitating feedback for the teachers to work on teaching to provide better learning opportunities for the learners (Westbroek et al., 2020). This process is very interactive as both the teachers and the students take part in the learning process. By collecting information about learners' knowledge, teachers may provide assistance and feedback to attain the learning goals (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2010). Formative and diagnostic assessments are generally referred to as assessment for learning.

Assessment of learning, on the other hand, is an assessment of students' learning. Students act as their assessors to determine their own progress. This process involves students actively where they assess their learning. According to Yusop and Ferdaus (2022), educators assist the learners in monitoring their progress through the metacognition process and achieving their own goals. They also enable the learners and teachers to reflect on their own learning progress, identify their growth, identify the next step, and set their own learning goals through dialogue, demonstration, observation as a part of everyday classroom practice (Cowie, Harrison & Willis, 2018). The educators engage the students in learning through assessment by providing them with different learning models. Some of the AALs are ipsative assessment, self-assessment, peer assessment and so on (Yusop & Ferdaus, 2022).

Assessment of Learning (AOL) is the most traditional exams-oriented assessment process. The entire grade-based assessments like exams, tests, final projects that are performed to determine students' grades and overall learning at the end of a learning period fall under this process. This assessment system gathers information about students' leanings and their performance. The final result of AOL is highly significant for a student's life as it influences the next chapter of a learner. Higher education, employment, and scholarship applications depend on this type of assessment. The example of AOL is the summative test and norm-referenced test (Yusop & Ferdaus, 2022).

Based on the three approaches mentioned above assessment is categorized as diagnostic assessment, summative assessment, formative assessment, ipsative assessment, norm-referenced assessment, criterion-referenced assessment and so on (Kampen, 2021).

Diagnostic assessment provides information about students' existing knowledge by which teachers get an idea about students' skills, knowledge, strengths, and weaknesses. Short quizzes, student interviews, reflections, discussions, and so on are used as forms of diagnostic assessment (Kampen, 2021).

Formative assessments allow teachers to learn the learning styles, processes, and progress of the students in real time. This assessment facilitates the teachers to adapt teaching styles accordingly. Portfolios, group projects, progress reports, regular quizzes are some of the examples of formative assessment. Formative assessment is a continuous process that takes place in a learning period and teachers can provide constructive feedback to the learners (Kitula & Ogoti, 2018).

Summative assessment provides a picture of a student's overall knowledge. It determines the level of learning objectives attained by the learners. It generally takes place at the end of a

learning period. Final exams and final projects are considered summative assessments (Kampen, 2021; Kituli & Ogoti, 2018). Furthermore, Ipsative assessments are assessments that provide learners with a second try to compare and improve their growth and learning. Portfolios, project-based learning activities and so on are examples of ipsative assessment (Kampen, 2021)

Norm-referenced exams assess students in comparison to their peers maintaining a national standard where ranking is done. Standardized college entrance exams are considered norm-referenced exams. On the other hand, criterion-referenced assessment assesses the learners against some fixed criteria. Students are graded based on their performance by meeting those criteria (Kampen, 2021).

Traditionally summative assessment is used in the classroom to assess students' overall learning and it plays a crucial role in the life of the students, teachers and other stakeholders. So the focus is given to the achievement of the learners. However, Alternative assessment is the kind of assessment that provides an authentic experience to the teacher and the students by engaging in several activities throughout the learning period and developing real life learning experiences (Yusop & Ferdaus, 2022).

2.2 AA: New Dimension of Assessment

Alternative assessment, as the name suggests, refers to the alternative ways of assessing learners' overall learning process. Alternative assessment is a variety of alternative ways of traditional and standardized ways of testing. AA is referred to as authentic, comprehensive assessment and sometimes performance-based assessment (Sulaiman et al., 2020; Yusop & Firdaus, 2022). Al Mahrooqi and Denman (2018) narrate that alternative assessment was introduced due to the shortcomings of the conventional assessment system when applied to

learners with special needs. Eventually, alternative ways of assessing learners with special needs was established in the United States. However, the potential of incorporating AA as it associates different intelligences and preferred learning style of the learners was soon recognized. The utility of AA is also regarded as it involves a variety of tasks that requires the learners to use higher-level thinking skills (HOTS) associated with real-life situations (Al Ruqeshi, 2015).

Alternative assessment, also referred to as classroom-based assessment, qualitative assessment, informal assessment, and performance-based assessment engages the learners in various skills and tasks based activities which imitate real life situations (Sulaiman et al., 2020; Janisch, Liu & Akrofi, 2007). According to Janisch, Liu, and Akrofi (2007), alternative assessment has distinguished features which are:

1. Alternative assessment takes place in the classroom where the teachers are responsible for making the choices of the measures that will be used
2. Alternative assessment follows the constructive view of learning and the learning outcome is influenced by the students, the text and the context
3. Alternative assessment inherits the fact that learning processes are equal to the learning outcomes, if not greater.

Quoting a number of scholars, Yusop and Ferdaus (2022) stated that alternative assessments are generally categorized as authentic assessments, performance-based assessment and constructivist assessment. In authentic assessment students are required to use their knowledge in real-life related meaningful tasks to complete them. In performance-based tasks, students are assessed based on their ability to use higher-order thinking skills to complete the tasks. The educators observe the students how fruitfully they can use their skills that they have developed. Lastly, through constructivist tasks students' ability to master a certain skill is tested in constructivist

assessment (Yusop and Ferdaus, 2022). Ghaffar and Yusop (2018) explain that AA assesses learners' skill and proficiencies to complete complex tasks that have a particular learning outcome. This happens over a course of time which provides the teachers with an understanding of students' learning process and their growth to develop an appropriate teaching approach. Even though there is no specific categorization of alternative assessment, Ghaffar and Yusop (2018) have divided AA into five categories: peer-self-assessment, group-based assessments, performance-based assessment, portfolio assessment and technology-based assessments.

Peer assessment refers to providing constructive feedback to the peer on their work. It allows the learners to assess each other's work and use their own skills to determine the appropriateness of their group mates' works. By giving feedback like that learners take the responsibility of a teacher and learn to develop interpersonal skills. On the other hand, self assessment allows the learners to reflect on their own works which not only develop their own skills but also improve their work (Ghaffar & Yusop, 2018).

Group-based assessment is an outcome-oriented approach where the students follow a particular strategy to work in a group and attain a goal. In this process, students learn to collaborate, communicate and leadership skills which are essential for their future education and employment. While doing group work students also develop their sense of responsibility as they manage their own tasks and also help each other to prepare a well coordinated project. In group projects learners are monitored by their teachers which help them to develop their collaborative skills (Ghaffar & Yusop, 2018).

Another significant assessment, according to Ghaffar and Yusop (2028) is a performance-based assessment where students' performances are assessed based on their use of knowledge and skills. Completing tasks that resemble real life, authentic contexts and situations fall under

this category. To perform these tasks students need to use their gained knowledge to show how they are using it in real-life situations. Students use their problem-solving skills rather than just answering questions and in this process they use their higher-order thinking skills to perform the tasks (Chun, 2010).

Portfolio-based assessment is also a great way of assessing students' learning progress. Portfolios work as evidence of the learning process of a learner. For a portfolio a student needs to compile all their work throughout a learning period and the final product shows the learning process, improvements, failures and growth. It is a collection of their works which allows the students to reflect on their project again and again and enable them to identify their mistakes and progress (Nopitasari & Tristan, 2022). A portfolio preserves students' write-ups, essays, projects, class notes, handouts, and all the different learning activities which allow them to reflect on their own works. By maintaining a portfolio students learn how to coherently arrange their works. It serves both the purpose of formative and summative assessment as it is done continuously throughout the learning period and it also works as a final report (Ghaffar & Yusop, 2018). According to Nopitasari and Tristan (2022), using portfolio as a form of AA can improve students' learning in the course of time.

Technological evolution has greatly impacted the education system. In this advanced world teaching and learning have also been equipped with advanced technology. Technology-based assessment can be defined as a method of using technology to assess learners (Ghaffar & Yusop, 2018). Technology-based assessment can be both formative and summative as it helps educators to provide feedback immediately and also store the information for future assessments. According to Ghaffar and Yusop (2018) educators should pay attention to the "four C's" while

using technology with learners and they are: collaboration, communication, critical thinking and creative thinking.

2.3 Alternative Assessment across the Globe

The ultimate focus of AA is to assess students' ability to develop and use their knowledge in real life situations rather than assessing their learning from the classroom through exams. Moqbel (2016) mentioned that AA not only provides information about students' actual skill and knowledge development, but it also provides information about students' learning styles, strengths, and weaknesses. As traditional assessment failed to provide all this information, alternative assessment was proposed to get the actual idea of students' learning process (Moqbel, 2016).

Alternative assessment is now being used across the globe to provide better teaching and learning opportunities to teachers and learners. Poddar and Mizan (2020) have compiled a few findings from different studies conducted in different parts of the world about the implementation of alternative assessment in their paper. Their study shows that South African students developed different skills rather than just gaining knowledge because of the implementation of alternative assessment. Other research mentioned in their paper which is conducted in Brunei showed that 80% of the participants who were secondary school teachers believe that AA is beneficial in developing critical and creative thinking skills and 85% believe that AA supported learning let alone hampered classroom teaching. They also mentioned that AA promotes active learning and boosts students' self-confidence (Poddar& Mizan, 2020).

Barbarics (2019) in his study shows that Hungarian teachers used alternative assessments to reduce students' stress caused by traditional testing and provided them different task-based assessment and constructive feedback to improve teaching and learning. He added that AA

develops students' creative thinking skills, problem solving skills, makes them self-regulated learners and develops students' cooperative attitude (Barbarics, 2019).

The study conducted by Damir et al, (2018) at elementary level mathematics curriculum shows the comparison in the use of alternative assessment methods in the United States and Turkey. Results of the study shows that in the United States the teachers were more educated in terms of the application of AA as the participants expressed that they had enough resources to learn about the application of AA. On the other hand Turkish teachers lack information about the application of AA and they pointed out that they lack information due to the lack of education and professional support. The US teachers pointed out that AA is time consuming and this is one of the major drawbacks according to the teachers (Damir et al., 2018).

In the EFL/ESL context AA assessment is being popular gradually. However, the influence of traditional assessment is still prominent. Sing et al., (2022) anticipates that the Malaysian education system is too exam oriented and emphasizes more on rote learning. The findings of the papers show that teachers have used alternative assessment, summative assessment, informal assessment, portfolio, self and peer assessment, and so on. However, they are more dependent on summative assessment to determine students' overall success. According to Sing et al., (2022) teachers need more exposure and in-house training to implement AA and it will engage students in active learning and allow them to monitor their own learning.

Another study done by Sulaiman et al., (2020) also shows that in Malaysia different forms of AA such as presentations, individual projects, written papers, group work, and so on are used. However, portfolios, journals, workbooks are not used. Teachers believe that AA compliments formative assessment but they are only suitable for small classrooms. This study suggests that

teachers need personal development sessions to be aware of different authentic forms of assessments (Sulaiman et al., 2020).

Chong Lem (2019) finds that portfolio as an alternative way of assessment is only used as a support for learning rather than a form of assessment. In his paper he suggested a theoretical framework for the implementation of a portfolio as a form of AA. Dung and Ha (2019) pointed out some benefits and disadvantages of portfolio assessment in the EFL context. The benefits include enhancing students' learning, informing teachers and facilitating the assessment process. Along with these positive washback and authenticity are the other benefits. The drawbacks include design decisions, interpretation and validity and reliability issues. Despite the drawbacks, portfolio assessment can have a long-term effect on students learning autonomy, motivation and successful learning rather than standardized tests (Dung & Ha, 2019).

2.4 Promoting AA in EFL Classroom

Recently In the education field, a reform can be witnessed. The shift from traditional testing to assessment has emerged as an evolution where traditional summative assessment is changing to formative, also referred to as alternative assessments. This shift is described as a reform by Charvade, Jahandar and Khodabandehlou (2012). This reform is closely related to the fact that learning is becoming more and more learner-centered which requires assessment methods that engage the learners in the assessment process rather than just making them go through a test. The pedagogy of English as a Second Language (ESL)/ English as a Foreign Language (EFL) has also shifted to a learner-centered communicative approach. Due to this shift, the assessment method in ESL/EFL field has also excelled to alternative assessment systems from traditional testing (Diep et al., 2019). Hence alternative assessment has become significantly prominent and also been accepted in the ESL/EFL field of instruction (Monib,

Kamiri & Nijat, 2020). Monib, Kamiri, and Nijat (2020) believe that English language learning and testing are interconnected and they are inevitably different from the testing practices of other fields. Al Mahrooqi and Denman (2018) elaborated that English language learning and assessment are complex in nature and due to this complexity different alternative assessments are used to assess the learners.

According to Moqbel (2016) EFL classroom assessment needs to be diagnostic so that teachers can get a clear idea about the ability of the students in terms of using the language. Assessment in EFL classrooms should help the teacher to monitor student's progress and identify their lacking. Moqbel (2016) added that assessment should provide an overall picture of students' ability in English language rather than giving an incoherent image of learning taken from out-of-context tests. In AA a learner's performance is measured based on a particular learning objective or performance standard not against the performance of other students at national or local level (Dung & Ha, 2019). In Moqbel's (2016) opinion, traditional assessment fails to provide information about a learner's actual potential to use English in EFL classroom as it only assesses students' ability to recall rather than the holistic use of language in real-life context. In an ESL/EFL context where the main role of assessment is to provide a clear picture of students' abilities so that the educators can form a better teaching method, alternative assessment allows the teachers to make necessary measures for the learners as it is a continuous process and not a process to determine students' success at the end of a course or year (Monib, Kamiri & Nijat, 2020; Moqbel, 2016).

In an EFL/ESL classroom, variety of alternative assessments such as portfolios, reading logs, writing folders, projects, teacher-student-parent conference, audio-visual recordings, peer assessment, self assessment, teacher's observation, and many more are employed (Al-Mahrooqi

& Denman, 2018; Janisch, Liu & Akrofi, 2007). All these assessments cover the development of the four macro skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking. The implication of these assessments has shown a positive correlation between language abilities and assessment. Along with that students' motivation, interest and confidence have also developed (Monib, Kamiri & Nijat, 2020).

2.5 Backwash Effect in AA: the Positive and Negative Aspects

In the field of education, the backwash or washback effect indicates the influence of testing of teaching and learning. Hughes (2020) describes the backwash effect as the effect of tests on teaching and learning. He elaborated, "Backwash is now seen as a part of the impact a test may have on learners and teachers, on the educational system in general and on the society at large." Xin (2023) defines the backwash effect as the influence of language testing on teaching and learning. He added that several individuals are directly or indirectly affected by exams and teachers and students are the direct ones.

The most meaningful research model of backwash effect was established by Anderson and Walls (1993). They proposed 15 hypotheses that outlined the backwash effect research in language testing. The hypotheses include the effects of test on teaching, learning, content, teaching-learning methods, degree and intensity of teaching and learning, impact on different stakeholders (Anderson and Wall, 1993 in Xin 2023).

On the other hand Hughes (2020) believes that testing affects participants, processes, and products where participants are teachers, students, administrators, textbook developer, publishers; process includes teaching learning methods, development, adaptation of strategies and so on; products refers to the knowledge, skills and quality of learning. These two different

perspectives show that the backwash effect is prominent on teaching, learning, and stakeholders and on every aspect related to tests.

The Backwash effect has two aspects: positive backwash effect and negative backwash effect (Brown, 1997; Phromsorn & Palton, 2021; Suryanto et al., 2023). This positive and negative effect can be perceived from four types of backwash and they are: target backwash, content backwash, method backwash and reliability and validity backwash (Huang, 2019). Firstly, the goal of language testing greatly affects language teachers' choice of their teaching objectives and these objectives influence teaching. Secondly, the content of language testing influences the choice of teaching context which can be referred to as content backwash that has both positive and negative aspects. Language testing methods also highly influence language teaching methods which lead to backwash effects. Finally, validity and reliability issues also cause a backwash effect. The higher reliability of a test shows the accurate and objective reflection of language competence of the subject and higher validity shows the effective reflection of language use and communicative competence of the subjects. As it is tough to attain both validity and reliability to a great extent, the backwash effect is reflected in the tests as well as teaching and learning (Huang, 2019).

Beikmahdavi (2016) refers to the backwash effect as a bipolar concept that can either be positive or negative. The negative washback effect refers to the negative influence of a test on language teaching and learning. The inconsistent relationship between testing and teaching objectives causes negative backwash effects (Xin, 2023). Xin (2023) points out that society expects easily identifiable results of students' learning from educational institutes which makes the teachers focus more on the exam-related content and the whole teaching-learning process revolves around exams related topics. According to Beikmahdavi (2016) these tests narrow down

the amount of content in the syllabus. When testing gets ultimate attention, teachers tend to teach important topics and as society expects good results, focus on learning shifts from acquiring knowledge to doing better in the exams. Hence, teaching does not meet learning outcomes and teaching and learning methods also face compromisation. Xin (2023) stated that the constant influence of testing that has deficiencies in content and form certainly brings negative effects on teaching and plays an obstructive role.

If due to the washback effect fare changes are brought in teaching and learning then that effect becomes a positive backwash effect (Alqahtani, 2021). Xin (2023) mentioned three aspects of positive washback effect. Firstly, language testing can become a great source for accelerating students' learning process. Testing sets a certain goal that encourages the learners to attain and by doing so testing makes the students more aware of their learning and helps them to attain goals through extensive studying. Secondly, language testing sets a milestone for teachers as well. Teachers can pay more attention to their learning methods and assist students to incorporate different learning strategies. Finally, language testing can make teaching and learning materials and curriculum more standardized and scientific. It can not only improve teaching and learning but also all the related fields like assessment of real language ability, course design, curriculum, syllabus, and whatnot (Xin, 2023).

2.6 Backwash Effect of Different Examinations in Bangladesh

The effects of any kind of exams are visible in the learning process of a learner, most significantly the effect of high-stakes exams. High stake examinations refer to exams that have consequences on students' grade promotion, graduation, teachers' accountability, schools' reputation and funding (Johnson et al., 2007). For a student, a test that determines their future higher education becomes a high-stakes test.

Ashadi and Rice (2016) mentioned the potential benefits of high-stakes examination including unbiased assessment, clear instructions for teachers and policymakers. The results of high-stakes tests are determined by a broader cohort of peers rather than local educators which minimizes the influence or biases of the teachers for a particular educational institute. These tests also provide a clear instruction for the teachers about what to teach. Along with that, policymakers get information about the performance of different institutes which allow them to compare the performances of systems and schools (Ashadi & Rice, 2016). They have also pointed out several negative effects of high-stakes tests including deduction in the syllabus, learning to more teacher centered instruction and mental pressure for the students. The consequences of high-stakes examinations are mainly visible in the narrowing down of the syllabus. Focus is only given on the content that will most likely appear in the exam and other topics are least emphasized. Students' well-being is also hampered due to the anxiety and stress caused by these high-stakes exams (Ashadi & Rice, 2016).

In Asian countries examinations play a dominant role due to academic and social influence especially in Bangladesh where exams are celebrated (Jahan & Uddin, 2020; Al Amin & Greenwood, 2018). Among numerous examinations, board examinations are mostly regarded in Bangladesh due to their high influence on students' educational growth. There are four main board examinations in Bangladesh: Primary School Certificate (PSC), Junior School Certificate (JSC), Secondary School Certificate (SSC) and Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) (Biswas). Other examinations like final examinations of school, college and university are high stakes as they influence a student's future studies, placements and subject choices. Standardized tests like IELTS, SAT, GRE, TOEFL, GMAT, etc are also high-stakes examinations because they influence foreign studies. Even the university entrance exams are also high-stakes exams as they

decide students' future area of studies, placement, career choices (Janison Education Group, 2022).

High-stakes examinations mostly have a negative impact both on teaching and learning due to their significance in deciding a student's future. In South Asian countries like Bangladesh, this effect is even more intense as the teaching and learning circles around exams and students' overall success is determined through the high-stakes exams. A study conducted by Sultana (2018) shows that even though in Bangladesh we have CLT based National curriculum that requires teaching and testing of all four macro skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking; due to the absence of test format of listening and speaking, these skills are not properly taught or assessed in the educational institutes. She also highlighted that these exams lack content validity as they emphasize more on memorization-based knowledge rather than communicative competence (Sultana, 2018). The effect of high-stakes examinations leads the students to take extra coaching classes, follow guidebooks and other exam preparation courses. Students highly depend on guidebooks and besides reading textbooks they memorize guidebooks to do better in the examinations (Al Amin & Greenwood, 2018). Al Amin and Greenwood (2018) have also pointed out that teachers tend to take mock tests to prepare the students for the main exams and these tests also pay attention to important topics so the teaching circle around those topics especially towards the end of a school year. Teachers are also judged based on their students' performances. For that reason, they focus on the contents which are important for the exams. Parents also pay for students' coaching, guidebooks as they want the results. Biswas (2021) pointed out the harmful effects of high-stake exams on students' mental health. Due to the pressure of the outcome of the results students feel anxiety, and stress, especially low achieving students. A number of students even attempted to take their lives (Al Amin & Greenwood, 2018;

Biswas, 2021). In the process of getting good marks in the exams students lose their imagination as they focus more on memorization. This advocates problems like exam queuing leaking, cheating in the exams and so on (Biswas, 2021).

Not only students are affected by the high-stakes examinations, teachers suffer equally. Rahman et al., (2021) mentioned that teaching methods are influenced by the test so teachers need to adjust their teaching accordingly. They feel stress and anxiety as well as they are constantly pressured by the schools and parents. They sometimes need to lower their morals and prioritize the important topics, notebooks, and coaching classes due to these situations. They had to make a decision between pedagogical issues and ethical issues (Rahman et al., 2021).

2.7 Traditional Assessment to Alternative Assessment: The Emergence of AA in Bangladesh

The quality of education has always been a priority for the Ministry of Education of Bangladesh. However, questions have always been raised against the assessment system as it remained pen and paper-based in most of the cases. For that reason, even though the students developed cognitive skills, their ability to use those skills did not develop. Hence, the School Based Assessment (SBA) was introduced where 30% marks were allotted for alternative ways of assessments like group works, pair works, projects, report writings and other factors like leadership, tolerance, co-curricular activities, school values, social values, and so on (Uddin, 2010, Poddar & Mizan, 2020). Later the secondary curriculum 2012 introduced Continuous Assessment (CA) in the place of SBA with 20% marks allotted for all the subjects (Poddar, 2020). In his writing, Poddar (2020) mentioned that a question has arisen on the readiness of the secondary schools teachers to implement alternative assessment in their class. He interviewed teachers from renowned institutes and they mentioned that around 40% of the teachers have

training on the implementation of AA but they do not have practical knowledge due to the lack of practice (Poddar, 2020). This shows that even though initiatives have been made, there are still issues that are hindering the application of AA.

Eventually due to the need for competency-based learning, National Curriculum Framework, 2021 was developed. NFC 2021 supported action-based learning. From the mission of developing local recourses for successful teaching and learning, NFC 2021 aimed to promote SDG for quality education (Arpa, 2024). Gradually, the changes in the curriculum were finally made in 2023 after it was made in 2012. This new curriculum is being called a new era of education that focuses on competency-based learning. This curriculum promotes experience based learning where students will acquire knowledge through experience (Abbas, 2023). Abbas (2023) also mentioned that the primary and the secondary level will follow this curriculum. Curriculum for higher secondary level will be developed eventually in later years.

At the tertiary level, the application of Alternative assessment is more prominent especially at private universities as around 50% of marks are allotted for different assessments like projects, presentations, attendance, assignments, group tasks, portfolios and many more. However, in public colleges, this scenario is different as they still rely on final pen and paper-based exams which show the negative washback effect as students only study to pass the exams and the unethical attempt to pass the exams become an alarming issue.

To date, very few studies have been conducted on the internal issues that are hindering the application of AA. Even though there are initiatives to reform the curriculum and change the evaluation system to support successful teaching and learning through authentic assessments, still the negative backwash effect and the tendency to lean back towards the traditional assessment system is still prominently visible. This thesis aims to find out the causes that are

hindering the application of AA even though the curriculum supports it. This paper also wants to explore the reasons that are questioning the readiness of the teachers. Finally this paper wants to explore how the proper implementation of AA can reduce backwash effects and makes learning authentic.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

This chapter discusses the research methodology used in conducting this research. As mentioned earlier, the study aims to look for the current situation of AA at the secondary level and the perception of the teachers and parents regarding the new emergence of AA. Along with that the research hopes to find out the relation between AA and the backwash effect and identify if AA is beneficial in reducing backwash effect or not. Finally the research aims to explore issues that are hindering the implementation of AA. The first research question explores the current status of newly implemented AA at the secondary level of education. The second question aims to observe its role in reducing backwash effects to promote successful teaching and learning. The third research question considers teachers' and parents' perspectives on AA and tries to find out issues that are hindering the implementation of it. Finally, the fourth research question attempts to find solutions for the issues. This chapter further discusses the research paradigm and the criteria of participant selection.

3.1 Research Design

This research follows a qualitative method of data collection and analysis. Even though there is different research strategy that uses different methods to collect and analyze data, I chose qualitative method to have an interactive data that are linked between the participants and I leading to a process and meaning oriented finding (Tsegaye, 2019). There are other methods like quantitative method and mixed methods. Quantitative method generally has larger amount of data that are free from any influence of the reseracher or the participants that provides scope for statistical analysis to show the concrete picture of a phenomenon. On the other hand mixed methods use both qualitative and quantitative approach (Tsegaye, 2019). For the purpose of this

research where I studied the perceptions of the teachers and parents to understand the overall views on AA, qualitative methods was used as I looked for the meaning that the participants associated with this particular topic rather than having a concrete reality that contradicts the aim of the study.

Qualitative research uses multiple tools to study things in their natural setting and try to find or interpret meaning that people associate with the setting using different empirical materials like case studies, interviews, observations, life stories, experiences and so on (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The tools used to collect data are semi-structured interviews and focus group discussion (FGD). The research is designed following previous scholarly literatures and research questions. This study follows the social constructivism research paradigm which discusses meaning based on context and meaning formed through interaction with others. In this study, the teachers' and parents' perceptions are the context of understanding the current situation AA at the secondary level, the role of the assessment in reducing backwash effect and issues that are closely related to AA along with their solutions. By interacting with the participants using semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions I tried to understand these aspects in an ESOL context.

3.2 Data Collection Tools: Semi-structured Interviews and Focus Group Discussion

For this study, I used semi-structured interviews and focus group discussion. These tools are generally used in a qualitative case study approach which is a research approach conducted through in-depth exploration of an event or phenomenon in its natural setting. The concept of case study came from legal cases where a single unit is described as a case (Zach, 2006). For qualitative studies qualitative interviews are mostly used to understand people's behavior,

approach, attitude, and so on in detail. There are three types of qualitative interviews. They are: structured, unstructured, and semi-structured (Gill et al., 2008). Structured interviews are done with predetermined close-ended questions with less scope for any follow-up questions. Unstructured interviews are informal interviews with open-ended questions that resemble real-life conversations with follow-up questions. Another commonly used interview is semi-structured interviews that combine the features of structured and unstructured interviews. Semi-structured interviews follow a theme or a general plan but use open-ended questions that are somewhat predetermined with the scope of follow-up questions to be more creative (Ugwu & Eze, 2023). In this interview questions are asked based on the preselected thematic framework. It is a flexible way of collecting detailed and rich data (George, 2022). It allowed me to get an insight into the subjective experience, objective and motivation of the participants. For the purpose of the study, I made the interview questions associated with the research questions to collect the data. Similarly focus group discussion allowed me to understand the expertise, experiences of the participants, and determine the reasons for the behaviors of individuals (Busetto, Wick & Gumbinger; 2020). The setting of the interview feels more authentic which allows the participant to discuss spontaneously (Ugwu & Eze, 2023). Using these tools I wanted to have an understanding about the status of AA at secondary level education and understand parents' and teachers' perceptions regarding this matter.

3.3 The Role of the Researcher

I learned about AA during my undergraduate studies. I gained elaborate knowledge on assessments from my Master's program. I observed that AA became significantly beneficial for the tertiary level education from my own experience as it not only develops real-life skills but also makes learning exciting and multi-dimensional. It develops interpersonal and intra personal

skills. It expands the horizon of teaching and learning. When I learned about the implementation of AA at the secondary level of education I noticed mixed reactions from teachers and parents. Also when I was in the secondary level, the assessment was totally different from the newly implemented AA.

This inspired me to look more into this matter and explore the current situation of AA at the secondary level. I aimed to understand if this assessment removes the fear of exams from the students' minds and makes learning more interesting or not. I also explored the issues regarding the implication of AA and tried to find out their solutions by regarding the perceptions of teachers and parents.

The study is conducted using "I" throughout this study. As a researcher I am free from any personal or cultural biases because I am not related to the teaching profession. I do not have any personal relationship with the secondary level students, secondary level teachers or the parents of the students. I paid attention to the participants and listened to them carefully. The opinion of the participants was highly regarded and the findings were discussed accordingly.

3.4 Settings

The research is set at a private university in the capital city Dhaka where I am conducting this study as the final thesis of my postgraduate program. The participants of the research are the secondary school teachers and parents of the students as I believe that they are the primary stakeholders of the education field. The teachers have firsthand experience of any changes made in the teaching methods or assessments. The parents are the main critics of the changes in the education department. For this reason, I decided to conduct my study with them. All the participants are from ESOL backgrounds and non-native English speakers. They are from

different schools in the city. As the main objective of the research is to find out the current situation of AA at secondary-level schools and understand the perceptions of parents and teachers regarding learners' association with AA, this setting served the purpose.

3.5 Participants

Qualitative research aims to have an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon that the researcher is interested in without creating too generalized or vague ideas. For this reason, participant selection plays a crucial role to make the study successful. This is why, while selecting participants, purposeful sampling is used rather than random selection. Purposeful selection, as the name suggests, refers to the intentional selection of individuals who will act as an asset for the research. In this technique the chosen participants provide valuable information which helps the researchers to have in-depth understanding, let other people learn about the phenomenon and provide understanding which encourages silent people to use their voice. (Creswell, 2007, p. 133).

There are different types of purposeful sampling. For this study, I used Snowball sampling. Snowball sampling is a purposeful sampling technique where the researcher finds one participant and requests him/her to recommend another participant. Snowball sampling is used when the researcher has less knowledge or familiarity of the participants. It is used during the data collection procedure and he/she may add a request while interviewing the participant who was selected first. This is a non-probability sampling as the time frame and access to the participants are limited (Walliman, 2021, p. 96).

3.5.1 Criteria of Selecting Participants

Selecting appropriate participants is the curtail step of any study as it facilitates appropriate data collection and results in finding expected outcomes. The first criterion of this

study is to select secondary-level school teachers as they know the current situation of AA at their institute. Secondary-level teachers are aware of the new assessment system and they know about their fellow teachers' parents' and students' reactions and responses regarding this. Also, they know the issues related to the successful implementation of AA. The second criterion was to choose parents of the learners as they are aware of their children's needs, progress, and skill development and so on. Their opinion matters significantly for the successful implementation of AA.

3.5.2 Participants' Profile

The participants' profiles are given below:

Table 1

Teachers' profile

Serial	Given identity for the paper	Education	Age and Gender	Occupation
1	P1	MA in Applied Linguistics and ELT	27 years, Female	Secondary level school teacher
2	P2	M. Ed	28 years, male	Secondary school teacher
3	P3	MA in Applied Linguistics and ELT	26 years, female	Secondary school teacher
4	P4	M. Ed	27 years, male	Secondary school teacher
5	P5	M. Ed	27 years, female	Secondary school teacher
6	P6	MA in Social Work	29 years, male	Secondary school teacher
7	P7	MA in Economics	28 years, female	Secondary school teacher
8	P8	MA in Applied Linguistics and TESOL	26 years, female	Secondary school teacher
9	P9	MA in Applied Linguistics	28 years, male	Secondary

10	P10	and ELT MA in English	27 years, male	school teacher Secondary school teacher
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Table 2*Parents' Profile*

Serial	Given identity for the study	Education	Occupation
1	G1	Masters	Service
2	G2	Masters	Housewife
3	G3	BA	Business
4	G4	BA	Housewife
5	G5	BA	Housewife

3.6 OVERVIEW OF DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

There are different ways of collecting data for a qualitative study such as interviews, observations, and analyzing primary and secondary data like newspaper articles, photographs and so on (McCombes, 2022). Among these, I chose an interview to collect data. For the interview, semi structured interview is used. I also used a focused group discussing. The process of data collection is described in the following section.

3.6.1 Interview Protocol

I aim to use semi-structured interviews and focused group discussions to conduct the study. Semi-structured interview helps to understand the viewpoint of the participant about the indented subject of the research. Similarly focused group discussion is used to collect data from

the participants who have similar expertise and experience on a particular topic to understand their collective views (Busetto, Wick & Gumbinger; 2020).

In this study, the participants are secondary school teachers and the parents of the learners. To conduct case studies, interviews will be used. Among different types of interviews, I used a semi-standardized interview (or semi-structured interview). In this interview open-ended questions are used and there is scope for unanticipated responses and the emergence of issues that vary depending on individual perspectives. This is used for the focused group discussion as well. It is a more flexible interview process where interviewees can tell their real-life stories rather than answering a list of structured questions. In this process, the interviewer can use different levels of language to clarify the terms to the participants (Rayn, Coughlan & Cronin, 2009).

For the interview purpose, I adopted and the Interview Protocol Refinement (IPR) framework (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). It has four parts:

- a. Alignment of interview question with research question
- b. Constructing inquiry-based conversation
- c. Receiving feedback on interview protocol
- d. Piloting the interview protocol

The following chart shows the IPR framework. In this framework, every step can be repeatedly reviewed and refined. (Castillo-Montoya,2016; Yeong et al., 2018).

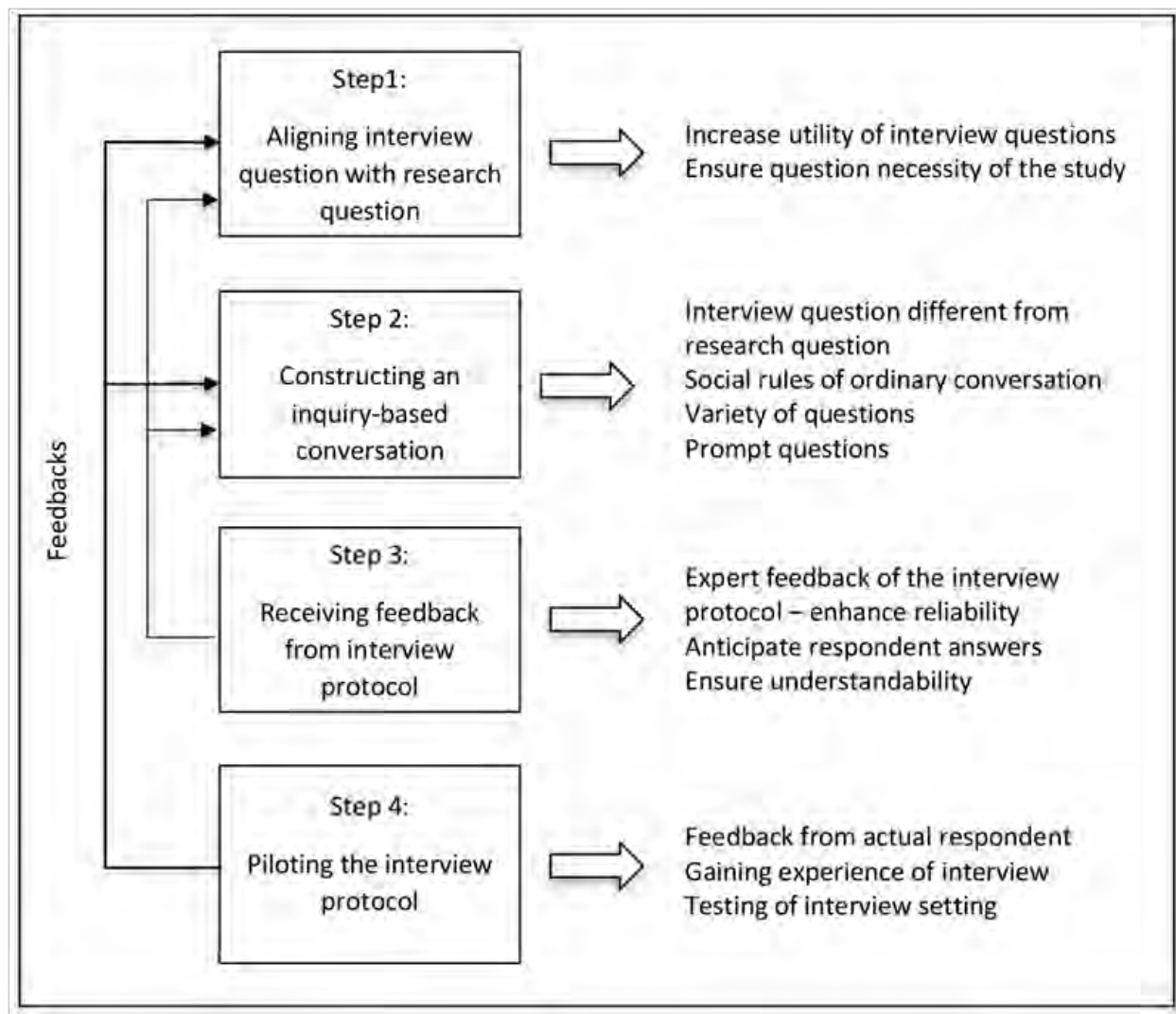


Figure 1: process of fine-tuning interview protocol (Yeong et al.,2018)

In the first step, I made sure that the interview questions are related to the research question (Appendix B). In the second step, I took into account that the interview questions must not be the same as research questions. Then the chronology of the questions must be followed so that the conversation can have a regular flow. In the third step, I got approval from my respected teacher to finalize the questions and finally, after reviewing in the fourth step the questions were ready for piloting in the actual interview.

3.6.2 Conducting the Interviews

After receiving advice from the expert I finalized the interview questions. Then I sent a consent form to the participants (Appendix A). After receiving the consent I fixed time according to the free time of the participants. Then I took the interviews and recorded them. Before that, I asked for permission. Each interview took 20 to 30 minutes. I maintained a moderate flow to conduct the interviews. I explained a few things in my native language as well. I maintained a friendly approach to the interviews. I maintained confidentiality and anonymity. I ensured my participants that their personal information is fully secured. I used pseudo names for my participants in my study.

3.7 Data Analysis Procedure

For this research data is collected using semi-structured interviews and focused group discussion. So the recordings of the interviews, discussion and notes taken during the interview are organized by material types like interview recording folders and note-keeping folders. After that, the data is transcribed and coded. Then themes are created using the codes. Further, the themes from the multiple case studies are analyzed using the thematic data analysis method. For thematic data analysis, 6 steps approach is followed as proposed by Braun and Clarke (2012).

The steps are:

1. Familiarizing with the data: transcribing data, reading and coding.
2. Generating initial codes: coding data in a systematic way and collating the data relevant to the codes.

3. Searching for themes: creating theme from the collated codes and gathering data related to the themes
4. Review potential theme: check if the data works perfectly to the data set, generate a thematic map
5. Defining and naming themes: generating proper names for the data
6. Producing the report: analyzing the data accordingly, relating to the research questions or literature and then producing the report.

After collecting and organizing the data I transcribed the data. After that coding was done using a seven column coding template (Ahmed, 2017). After that I looked for a pattern in the codes to come up with emerging themes. Then based on the research questions the theme is organized. The title is also given to the themes. The themes are organized in a pattern and analyzed.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

I took account of all the ethical issues while collecting the data. Before taking interviews I prepared consent forms for the participants. After taking consent from the participants I interviewed the participants. I also asked for permission before recording the data. During transcription, coding and discussing the results she gave pseudo names to the participants. In each section, she respected the privacy of the participants.

3.9 Trustworthiness of the Study

The trustworthiness of qualitative data depends on four steps. Quoting Lincoln and Guba (1985) Korstjens and Moser (2018) mention that credibility, transferability, dependability, and

confirmability are the four steps to trustworthiness. Credibility refers to the correct interpretation of the participants' views and getting related findings. Transferability is the ability to transfer the result of a qualitative study in different contexts and different participants and still get similar results. Dependability describes the stability of findings. Confirmability is the process that shows that the findings are derived straight from the participants' views (Korstjens and Moser, 2018).

To make the study trustworthy I explored a lot of scholarly studies. I took expert's suggestions in every step of the study. I also edited my work every time after getting feedback. For transferability and dependability I showed the themes created from the codes to my teacher and she agreed and disagreed on those themes based on participants' statements. Thus I made my paper trustworthy.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results and Discussion

Introduction

In this chapter, the results of the study are discussed. The main objective of the study is to explore the current situation of AA at secondary level and understand if it can reduce the negative backlash effects of exam-based assessment and make students motivated to learn or not. The study also aimed to explore the issues that are hindering the successful implementation of AA through the perceptions of teachers and parents to look for the solutions. The findings are discussed based on the research questions. At first teachers' perceptions on AA are presented from the interviews and after that, parents' perceptions from the group discussion are discussed.

4.1 Teachers' Perceptions

In this part, the responses of the teachers from the interviews are described.

4.1.1 Positive Attitude of the Teachers on AA

The secondary level teachers that I interviewed expressed a positive attitude towards the emergence of AA. They explained that all the instructions are given in the textbook on how to perform the tasks as well as how to assess the students for a particular topic. When I asked the participants if they supported it or not all of them said that it is better than the previous pen and paper based exams. In this regard participant 1 (P1) mentioned:

Yes, I do because it is better than the previous pen and paper-based exams. The approaches are good and the curriculum is also really good. So even though the whole assessment process is given in the textbook, I at least get the opportunity to use them for my students so it's better than the past assessments.

Almost all the participants said that AA has allowed the students to gain knowledge by actively participating in the assessments like projects, group work, presentations, table making, and so on. According to Participant 2, speaking and reading skills got more emphasis in this new assessment. Showing a conversation of a student and teacher participant 2 expressed his wonder that how a student of class 6 from a school in a not so developed part of the city can speak so fluently. All the other participants also said that AA develops the skills of the students. It develops collaboration skills that help the students to perform well in real life context. Participant 3 thinks that AA helps the teachers to learn about the strengths and weaknesses of the learners. In Participant 5's opinion AA allows the teachers to gather authentic data about the learners. Other participants also think that it's a good beginning to bring changes in the teaching and learning styles.

However, some of the participants think that a lot of schools in the underdeveloped areas are struggling. The teachers are facing problems understanding the whole assessment process. In those areas where many students struggle to even identify alphabets in class 6, it's almost impossible for them to perform all the tasks on their own. In those schools teachers are doing the assessments traditionally which is hindering the aim of AA to be attained. Participant 2 has shown his concern about such schools and the teachers and learners. Also many inattentive students have become more inattentive as there is no memorization based studies. In this regards participant 4 said:

“AA is unique, students face problems in understanding, students and parents and old teachers are having problems accepting it. Few students who were not attentive became even more inattentive. They do not understand the change in curriculum and assessment.”

Participant 9 mentioned that even though AA is assessing students' skills, it does not assess teachers' skills, however, in the implementation of AA the failings of the teachers are visible and as they themselves face issues in working with AA, the students will eventually suffer too.

Even though the majority of the teachers have constructive responses on AA, few teachers are struggling which is causing their students to face problems in developing skills.

4.1.2 AA in Reducing Negative Backwash Effect

When the participants were asked if AA can reduce the backwash effect or not, all the participants agreed on the fact that AA can actually reduce negative backwash effect. They mentioned that in AA students get a lot of practice sessions. So they are not anymore afraid about the exams. The participants also mentioned that because of AA students do not need to memorize anything. They can perform tasks by following the instructions which are described by their teachers and by performing tasks they are learning. Explaining the significance of AA in reducing the negative backwash effect participant 3 mentioned similar aspects.

Participant 4 also mentioned that the role of memorization has been reduced a lot. He said that because AA students focus on learning rather than rote memorization. He added that he appreciates this assessment system a lot. In this regards participant 5 mentioned:

“Yes, learning and application of knowledge take place through AA. We assess the learning process mainly so exams are less significant which reduce the fear of exams.”

However, participants 1, 6 and 8 drew a different picture in this regard. According to participant 1 the scenario has not yet been changed for many students. She mentioned the grading system which is triangles, squares, and circles. She explained that when she teaches something from the book as everything is given in the book and then asks students to come up with their own understanding, students tend to copy from different sources. For example, she said when she asks

her students to write a simile of their favorite poem she finds out that a number of students have written the same poem. She exclaimed how one poem can be everyone's favorite. She further mentioned that as everything is given in the textbook, the solution is also available everywhere like YouTube, Google. Students are copying them which in her opinion are worse than memorization and they are doing this to get triangles which are the highest grade. So this scenario remained unchanged like the traditional assessment where students will cheat in the exams or solely memorize something to get good grades. Participant 6 also thinks the pressure of the parents is still there and students are still afraid of assessments. Participant 8 thinks that as it is a new phenomenon, students are not yet over the fear of assessments. In response to the question if AA reduces negative backwash effect or not, he explained:

“It does sometimes. But as the students and teachers are just experiencing it recently, the pressure of assessment and fear is still visible. Students also have parents' pressure. But they are enjoying the process rather than sitting for exams.”

This response indicates that students have an adaptive attitude towards AA. However, as it has been implemented recently, they are not quite over the impact of the previous assessment style.

According to most of the participants, AA is beneficial in reducing the negative backwash effect. However, as it is a newly implemented concept, it will take time to fully work and make teaching and learning successful.

4.1.3 Students' Responses towards AA

All the participants said that students are quite enjoying the newly implemented AA in most of the cases. The main reason according to the participants is that students do not need to memorize anything. They can learn from practical experience. They are performing tasks in groups, doing projects, performing in the class and taking part in many more activities.

According to the teachers, students enjoy this learning style so much. They are developing collaboration skills; their speaking skills are developing really well. However, many inattentive students are becoming more inattentive according to Participant 7. She added that there are many studious students as well who have learned to memorize since early childhood. Also, there are a number of students who do not understand the process and they are suffering. Participant 9 mentioned that when they make a group, they combine students with good grades and students with poor grades. So in group work, most of the time the good students do all the work and all the students in the group get the same grade. So the grading becomes quite inappropriate. Participant 1 and 9 mentioned the students from underdeveloped areas who are struggling as their teachers are also struggling to implement AA properly. According to participant 1 many students in rural areas or even the less developed areas in the city are struggling. She added that even in class 6 students struggle to identify letters and numbers. It's really almost impossible for them to engage in such tasks mentioned in AA. participant 9 thinks that teachers who are struggling are doing the assessment traditionally like they are asking students to memorize the tables for telling all the students to memorize the elements that should have been learnt through performing or working in projects. According to the participants, even though students like the assessment if described correctly, due to the struggle of the teachers in implementing the assessment properly, they are struggling.

4.1.4 Teachers Readiness and Motivation

Answering the questions the participants have talked about a wide range of issues. The issues include traditional beliefs, large number of students per teacher, poor salaries, and lack of training on AA, no previous experiences, and many more. A majority of the participants talked

about age and traditional beliefs. According to them, many aged teachers are about to retire. They are not willing to adapt to new things. They have traditional thinking. Participant 1 said:

A number of teachers who are not young like us, their thinking are traditional and they support traditional assessment. They are not willing to adapt. They do not have a positive attitude towards AA. But teachers of the new generation are ready to adapt to it.

She added that teachers get really limited training. Even if they understand the process they cannot execute it due to the large number of students. She explained that a teacher has to monitor all the students' performances. They cannot just tell them to study a topic. Also they have to work on students who received poor grades. So the workload has doubled compared to the workload of traditional assessment. So teachers are less motivated. When she was asked about her opinion on the fact that AA is much more popular at tertiary level but not that much in secondary level, she said that tertiary level teachers are way more educated and trained. Their salary is also good and the student ratio per teacher is also bearable at tertiary level. However, the scenario is entirely different at secondary level. Participant 2 thinks that it is not about traditional assessment or alternative assessment. He thinks that teaching is the least favorite profession of the graduates. Especially, teaching at a primary and secondary level. Also, the salary range is really poor. According to him, the training that the teachers are receiving is not appropriate. He mentioned that the trainers are not highly skilled. Participant 3 thinks teachers are habituated to the traditional assessment system. They are not happy to accept change. Also for them the budget allocation as well as resources are very low. Participant 4 believes that a lot of schools are doing really well where the teachers are adapting the AA and implementing it properly. However, many schools, including government schools, are struggling where the number of students is really high. Teachers are struggling to monitor all the students. Participant

5 thinks and the readiness depends on the mindset of the teachers. She also thinks that teachers lack proper training which is the reason for their mindset. Nevertheless, she thinks that young teachers are adapting quite well. She mentioned:

“It depends on lots of factors like training, mind set, and experience and so on. Many teachers hesitated to accept AA but they are trying. Young teacher appreciates AA.”

Also, on the issue of AA at tertiary level and AA at secondary level, she mentioned that students at tertiary level are self-regulated learners but teachers need to monitor every single student at secondary level. The number of students is really high. Teachers need to work harder but their salary did not increase which is a major cause of lack of motivation of the teachers. Participant 6 added a new factor which is lack of tuition with other factors like personal beliefs, lack of training and so on. According to him teachers have to work hard but their salary is poor. Due to AA, they lost the opportunity to give tuition. So they are even less motivated. He explained:

Because of their own learning style, a long time experience and the fact that they have to work even harder many teachers who will retire soon are not at all interested in AA. Also, many teachers lack the understanding due to lack of training. They are also underpaid so they do not want to work any harder. In addition, they cannot do tuition due to AA so they are really unhappy about it.

About the fact that AA is widely accepted at the tertiary level but not at the secondary level he mentioned about the large number of students. He also thinks that tertiary level students are engaged in skill development-based learning but secondary level students are just learning basics. So the teachers are less motivated to accept AA. Participant 7 thinks that teachers have more work now than the children as they have to explain everything now and they also need to monitor every child, their work, progress, and so on. They lack training in this field and most

importantly there is no monitoring of the performance of the teachers. In her opinion, the government has not given enough time to cope up. It is just a burden for many teachers. Participant 8 also thinks that young teachers are accepting AA and are trying to implement it. However, older teachers are against it as it is not similar to their beliefs. Participant 9 thinks that the teacher needs time to adjust. They also require a higher salary package. According to participant 10, not just training is necessary, proper feedback on those training, classroom facilities, support from the parents are also extremely important and due to the lack of these things teachers are not that motivated.

4.1.5 Parents' Acceptance: from the Viewpoint of the Teachers

According to the majority of the participants most of the parents are not taking AA positively. They think that their children are not studying, they are just playing with the papers and stationeries, and they are wasting time and so on. Some parents think that their child is working harder than other students in group projects. Many parents are concerned about the fact that there is no proper examination. This is because when they were students they had traditional assessments. They lack knowledge about AA. Participant 5 explained:

“As the guardians faced traditional assessment when they studied, they do not understand. So they think traditional assessment is better.”

Other participants mentioned issues like asking for suggestions which is not possible in AA, asking for memorization topics and so on. Even though, most of the parents are against it, few participants mentioned about some parents who appreciate it after looking at their children's' skill development, their fluency in speaking, their excitement in work. Parents from teaching background support AA according to participant 2.

4.1.6 Steps Suggested by the Teachers for Successful Implementation of AA

All the participants have suggested a number of aspects that need to be taken care of. They have talked about a wide range of issues including pay scale, feedback on training, student teacher ratio, classroom management, class time management, support of parents, changing traditional mindset and many more.

Pay scale plays a significant role for the teachers. According to Participant 1, this assessment is adapted from abroad, so the development in the overall education system is mandatory and a pay scale similar to other developed countries that use AA is also needed. Other factors like training, monitoring, feedback etc are also needed. However, she especially emphasized a higher pay scale. She thinks that the lower pay scale is the major cause of teachers not feeling motivated to work hard. According to her, the pay scale is really poor to survive. She added that AA needs a lot more work than before but the salary is the same. For this reason teachers are not willing to accept it. Participant 10 also talked about similar issue. He thinks that it is high time to develop the salary range of secondary-level school teachers. He added that all the teachers are trying to understand the process. Whenever a new assessment system is implemented, teachers always try to make it successful even though their salary range is not good. Many teachers do not appreciate AA but still, they have to make it work. Participant 10 also thinks that it's a burden given by the government and many teachers are doing it because they have to do it, especially teachers with traditional mindset. He thinks that this is not how the process should be implemented. Rather, there should be a spontaneity and adaptive mindset. He believes that it will take a lot of time. He also talked about training, classroom management and so on, however, he emphasized more on time.

Classroom management also plays a crucial role. Participant 2 thinks that student

engagement is necessary. For the proper implementation of AA, classroom management and class time management is necessary. He explained that the number of students is really high at government schools. Monitoring over 60 students in a 35-minute class is almost impossible. For this reason, he thinks that the classroom capacity and class time need to be coordinated for successful implementation of AA.

Participant 3 thinks that as AA is a new phenomenon and teachers are experiencing it recently, they lack training. They need to adapt to AA through attending training and using the knowledge to properly use it. She mentioned:

“Teachers need to adopt AA, teacher-student ratio needs to be managed, proper training and feedback are needed, and budget allocation and salary increment will be highly motivated. Parents need knowledge and assurance from the teachers too.”

Participant 5 emphasized a lot of aspects. Participant 6 has also talked about similar things like increasing salary, availability of resources, training with feedback, maintaining student numbers, and time management. According to participant 4 teachers need to match the assessment with the learning level of the students. Even though the tasks are all given in the textbook, the teacher should develop and improvise similar tasks for the students to practice even more. To do so they need to develop their own knowledge, they need more resources.

Another significant suggestion was to ensure that the higher-ups continuously monitor and provide feedbacks on the trainings that the teachers receive. According to participant 7 monitoring of the higher ups is the most important part. He explained that everything is given in the textbook like a manual. General training is enough to understand it and be able to implement it effectively. However, it is not happening because there is no monitoring and feedback. Without feedback, training cannot do much good for the teachers according to participant 7. He

said:

“Monitoring in every aspect is needed. Books are self-explanatory so all the teachers need to do is explain them properly. Monitoring from the higher ups is mandatory.”

Participant 8 also thinks that feedback is important. Along with that a collaboration of teacher, parents and students are necessary. AA is a process in which teachers need experience to be able to properly implement it. For that, they need time and training. Also they need motivation; they need to be more adaptive.

The lack of knowledge of the trainers also became an issue. Participant 9 pointed out that the authority and the trainer sometimes lack the proper way of explaining the assessment system to the teachers. They may have the knowledge, learned from books but they do not have proper understanding. In the training they waste most of their time. There is no proper monitoring. He suggested that the process needs to be more serious and compact.

4.2 Parents' Perceptions

In this part the responses of the parents from the focused group discussion are discussed.

4.2.1 Rejection of the AA

Parents are quite pessimistic about this assessment because they think that there is not much to learn. One of the major points that they discussed is that their children are not doing the projects on their own. They are taking help from the parents, internet and various sources. They are becoming more device-oriented. The parents said that they cannot monitor their children all the time. According to them the government intended to make the students creative but they are not doing it properly. Participant 1 said:

The government wants the students to be creative and they will do everything on their own but they are not. How will they do it if they do not have knowledge? Nothing is coming from their

brain.

Participant 1 added that the parents can do these projects because they have knowledge. They have learned the basics. But students of class 6, 7 are just learning the basics. They cannot just do projects without knowledge. Participant 3 thinks that this implementation of AA is also one of the many experiments of the government. She exclaimed:

I think this is a part of the experiment. Every year there is an experiment with the kids.

They also do not like the work distribution of the projects. They said that sometimes they need to work till 2-3 am to complete the project.

4.2.2 Preference of Assessment method

Parents prefer exams with answering creative questions. All the participants agreed that creative questions were good. For that exam students used to study, memorize and try to understand as they had to write creative answers with adding their own opinion, observation and perceptions. However when they were asked if this assessment can reduce the negative effect on students' learning, they said that there is no exam. Students are just going to school.

Nevertheless, they think that AA is a great initiative for the grown-ups. The upper-level students will do well in this assessment as they will develop their knowledge and through this assessment their skills will be developed. Participant 2 thinks that this assessment is adapted from the education system abroad. She and other parents agreed that in other countries students learn better from childhood from these assessments. However, they think that it is not happening properly. Participant 2 said:

“I always say that the initiative of the government is great. It's really impressive. But it's not happening properly. I have relatives abroad, they are learning this way and they are doing really well. They are developing skills.”

They think that their kids are not as smart as the students abroad. Participant 4 said that it would not be wise to compare them as they are learning since childhood and the kids in our country are just facing it recently. They also think that these assessments are really causing financial problems. They think students of underdeveloped areas are suffering along with their parents. They need money to buy stuff for the projects. Participant 5 said, “It's a pressure for the guardians.”

4.2.3 Suggestions of the Parents

Even though they have opposing attitudes toward AA, they think the initiative is good. They liked the presentation part a lot as it develops the communication skills of the students. They think that this assessment should have been introduced gradually. They advised us to use it in the upper class step by step. Also they talked about training of the students. One of the participants thinks that parents need training as well to understand the system well.

4.3 Discussion

In this study, the main focus was to explore the current status of newly implemented AA at the secondary-level of education. This study explored parents' and teachers' perceptions regarding the implementation of AA, its role in reducing backwash effects, issues associated with the successful implementation of AA and the solutions of those issues.

From the study I noticed a positive attitude of the teachers regarding the implementations of AA. The teachers showed an accepting attitude towards AA and they agreed on the fact that AA develops the real-life skills of the learners and it goes beyond assessing students by their ability to write in the exams. Study shows that AA not only develops necessary skills of the learners to use them in real life context, it facilitates the teachers with the information about students' learning process. Teachers can get a clearer idea about the needs, learning process,

skills development, learning problems and so on of the students (Barbarics, 2019; Moqbel, 2016). This is why AA is appreciated by majority of the teachers (Poddar & Mizan, 2020). Still the system has the influence of traditional assessment in many cases due to traditional mind set of some teachers as portrayed by Sing et al., (2022) in their study. Nevertheless, as AA focuses on the learning of the students rather than assessing them through exams, the fear of exams which traditional assessment system had is removed to a great extent. In fact, AA allows the learners to learn from various aspects which boost their motivation, confidences and develop their interest in learning making assessment tools positively influencing the assessment system (Monib, Kamiri & Nijat, 2020, Alqahtani, 2021; Xin, 2023).

Both the parents and the teachers agreed on this fact that AA helps to reduce negative backwash effect. Even though there are several issues that affect the implementation of AA like lack of knowledge, professional support and so on, in house professional training, more exposure to the teachers can be beneficial for the successful implementation of AA (Damir et al., 2018; Sing et al., 2022). Furthermore, the parents think that AA is a great initiative, even though they have objections regarding it. Both the parents and teachers think that they need more time to understand, accept and implement AA for successful teaching and learning.

In this chapter I discussed the findings of the study that the research questions aimed to look for. The status of AA is still at the newly developed and implemented assessment system that requires time for teachers, students and parents to fully grasp. Even though they have positive attitude towards it and they agreed on the fact that AA can be beneficial to reduce backwash effects, there are different infrastructural and pedagogical gaps that are hindering the proper implementation of AA. The suggestions provided by the parents and the teachers are beneficial in mending those gaps. The next chapter summarizes all the findings of the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusion

This chapter aims to summarize the major findings of the study. In addition, some observations are stated and some recommendations are provided for the teachers and authority especially in an ESOL context. This study attempted to fill the gap of knowledge regarding the current status of AA at the secondary level, aspects that are hindering the application of it along with the suggestions for successful implementations of it. For this reason, the study explored the perceptions of secondary level teachers and parents of the students.

5.1 Major Findings

- Teachers have a positive attitude towards AA. They believe that students are being able to develop their skills.
- Many teachers from underdeveloped areas are struggling to understand AA and implement it properly due to the lack of knowledge, experience and adaptation ability. Hence, the students are struggling too.
- The current status of AA at the secondary-level of education is different based on area, attitude of the stakeholders, availability of different facilities and resources and so on.
- Majority of the teachers think that AA can reduce the backwash effect as it engages students in different activity-based learning and students get a lot of practice. However, few opinions show that the inattentive students have become more inattentive, students tend to copy each other's ideas and the pressure of parents and good grades are not distinct.
- Students like it as they get to be creative and learn from activity-based learning styles. They are less worried about exams and more excited about learning. They connect with

their teachers even more and participate actively.

- Many teachers are less motivated to accept AA because they have to work harder, monitor all the students, engage each and every student. Their salary range is poor, they lack experience, training, and there is no feedback. The aged teachers are not willing to accept changes, they are not adaptive. Teachers do not get support from guardians, they lack resources. Other issues like very high number of students per teacher, classroom management, lack of good trainers, lack of opportunity to develop their own knowledge are hindering the application of AA
- The teachers think that the majority of the guardians do not appreciate AA because they think that their children are not studying, they are just playing. They are concerned because there are no proper examinations. However, some parents think that their children are developing skills.
- Parents from the group discussion also showed their concern. They think that AA is for higher grade levels. There are many issues that they are struggling with including the grading system, work distribution, final assessment, and so on.
- Teachers have suggested a wide range of scope for development to implement AA successfully. Among them, higher pay scale, classroom and class time management, timely feedback and monitoring after every training, developing an adaptive mindset, and availability of resources for the teacher are mostly suggested. However, the majority of the participants think that they need more time to be able to implement AA successfully.
- Parents suggested that AA should be implemented for higher levels as the students will have the basic knowledge to perform all the tasks because they said that most of the kids do not do their projects on their own, they take help from different sources. They think

that AA should be implemented step by step and gradually. It should not be implemented all at once.

5.2 Observations

In this part of the study I listed a few observations that I noticed during interacting with the participants. Some of the observations are:

- The secondary level school teachers who were the participants of the case study took part in the interview quite spontaneously. They were all young teachers and they shared their thoughts frankly.
- Almost all the parents in the group discussion were vocal and they discussed their perceptions with a strong point of view.
- Majority of the participants had ideas about different terms used in the interview.

However, I have clarified a few terms in her mother tongue.

5.3 Contribution of the study

5.3.1 Implication for Teaching Strategy

AA plays a significant role in making learning more interesting, active and real-life oriented where students develop real life skills rather than learning by heart. In the secondary level of education the implementation of AA is going through lots of changes and challenges. This study discussed the overall status of AA at the secondary level. I has interviewed respected teachers from the secondary level to find out aspects that are hindering the successful implementation of AA at the secondary level. This study has compiled a number of suggestions provided by the participants. Those will be beneficial for the teachers and the authorities.

5.3.2 Implication for Knowledge

AA is a widely talked topic around the globe. Its significance, contribution, practice and

challenges have been studied all over the world. In an ESOL context, the status and implementation of AA is studied (Al-Ruqeishi & Al-Humaidi, 2016; Dung & Ha, 2019; Islam & Ahmed, 2018; Monib, Karibi & Nijat, 2020). However, recently in the secondary level education there has been a total change in the assessment system which is totally different from traditional assessment. Studies have been conducted on SBA (Uddin, 2010). However, this newly implemented AA is not discussed. There are very few studies on its significance in reducing the backwash effect and the complications it faces for successful implementation. This study attempted to bridge the gap of knowledge in this regard.

5.4 Limitations of the Study

In this part, I addressed a few limitations of the study. The first limitation is that the data is slightly inconsistent because I interviewed 10 different secondary-level school teachers from different schools. Secondly, the participants for the focused group discussion are quite limited. Thirdly, I's knowledge to conduct a study on this crucial topic is limited. This study is done covering a wider field which could have been more precise. However, this study also did not particularly cover the structural and economical constraints of the implementation of AA; rather it attempted to understand the overall picture of the newly implemented AA at the secondary level of education with its relation to the reduction of backwash effect regardless of different social, economical or structural boundaries. Finally, as the study is focused on a particular level, the findings will not facilitate the development of knowledge for other levels of students.

5.5 Recommendations

Referring to the finding I would like to provide a few recommendations:

- The authority should consider teachers' and parents' opinions before implementing any new assessment system

- Teachers' and parents' suggestions should be valued for successful implementation of AA
- Infrastructural and pedagogical development is also necessary.
- More research on social, economical, infrastructural aspects that are impacting the implementation of AA is needed.

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Appendix A

Letter of consent for participation

Dear Participant,

I am Anika Tahsin. I am pursuing my Master's degree in Applied Linguistics and ELT from a highly reputed private university in Bangladesh.

My research title is "Alternative Assessment to Reduce Negative Backwash Effect: Exploring the Aspects Hindering the Application of Alternative Assessments". The main objective of the study is to explore the current situation of AA at secondary level and understand if it can reduce negative backlash effects of exam based assessment and make students motivated to learn or not. The study also aimed to explore the issues that are hindering the successful implementation of AA through the perceptions of teachers and parents to look for the solutions.

For the purpose of data collection I am interviewing the secondary level school teachers and conducting a focused group discussion with the parents of the students. I will also record the interviews and discussion sessions for the purpose of the study. I will not disclose any information and I will give pseudo names to the participants.

If you would like to be a part of the study, please read the given consent form and sign it. I will appreciate your cooperation. Thank you

Sincerely,

Anika

Students of MA in English

Email: anikatasu181@gmail.com

Consent form

Please read the following form and tick if you agree.

1. I have understood the instructions and the main objective of the study and data collection method
2. My participation is voluntary and I can withdraw at any time
3. I agree to take part in the interview and be audio and video taped
4. I am giving permission to I to contact me through the contact information for any clarification

Name:

signature:

Date:

Phone number:

Email:

Appendix B: Interview Questions for the Participants

Interview questions	Background information	RQ1	RQ2	RQ3
What kind of assessment do you use to assess your students? Do you use alternative assessments?	X			
What is your perception on the use of AA in the place of traditional assessment?		X		
Do you think AA can reduce backwash effects? Can you explain please?		X		
What are your students' responses to the use of AA?		X		
Why do you think a number of teachers are not willing to accept AA in the place of traditional assessment			X	
What perception do the parents have? Do they support AA?			X	
What is your view on the readiness of teachers to use AA in their classroom?			X	
Why do you think AA is widely recognised at tertiary level but not at secondary level?				X

In your opinion what steps can be taken to make assessment more teaching and learning friendly				X
Do you think AA engages teachers and students for successful teaching and learning				X

Appendix C

Sample interview of the participants

Notational convention of the interview transcripts

Notation	Meaning
1. DU	Discourse Unit
2. R	Researcher (interviewer)
3. M	Moderator
4. <overlap>	speaking at a time
5. Umm	Hedging in speech
6. DU P1 26 number	DU <space> Participant 1 <space> DU number

Sample Interview of P1

DU	Participant	Question and Answer
1	R	Hello, how are you?
2	P1	I am doing great. How are you?

3	R	I am fine. I hope you remember that I talked to you about my thesis. So I will go straight to the interview questions. What kind of assessment do you use to assess your students? Do you use alternative assessments?
4	P1	Umm sure. So, we have a fixed guideline where we can only use those assessments that are given in that teachers' guide. We use the tasks from the books. The guideline also says how to perform that task and we follow that. We can not use anything outside that guideline
5	R	Do you support this? I mean you as a teacher can not experiment with the assessment to find out what's good for your students, right? Tell me about your perception.
6	P1	Yes I do because it is better than the previous pen and paper based exams. The approaches are good and the curriculum is also really good. So even though the whole assessment process is given in the textbook, I at least get the opportunity to use them for my students so it's better than the past assessments.
7	R	Okay. Do you think AA can reduce backwash effects? Can you explain please?
8	P1	Maybe. But not for everyone. I don't know if you know this or not, but we have to give triangles, squares and circles as grading. As everything is given in the textbook, the solutions are available everywhere like in google, youtube and so on. So if I ask them for example to write the simile from their favorite poem, the majority of them will write the same poem that they found in youtube or google. They are building the habit of copying which is worse than memorizing. However, students who really understand the process are not afraid of exams. We have 4 hours of trial exam sessions so students become familiar with the exam process as well
9	R	What are your students' responses to the use of AA?
10	P1	Well, students love it. They can take part in different projects. They can express their capabilities. But the teachers are struggling as they have to maintain a large number of students and many students do not understand. I believe students from govt schools in rural areas who struggle to identify letters even in secondary level suffer a lot due to this AA as they have to spontaneously perform the tasks. I also have a few of such students even in a school situated in Dhaka city. We have students from different backgrounds. Many guardians of the students are not that well educated. So the students only rely on teachers and we teachers do not have the time to be honest to look after each and every student. So a number of students get square and they do not feel good about it.
11	R	Why do you think a number of teachers are not willing to accept AA in the place of traditional assessment
12	P1	A number of teachers who are not young like us, their thinking is traditional and they support traditional assessment. They are not willing to adapt. They do not have a positive attitude towards AA. but teachers of the new generation are ready to adapt to it.

13	R	What about the parents? What perception do they have? Do they support AA?
14	P1	Well in most cases the answer is no. Parents love to ask for suggestions. Using AA you can not really tell them what they will get in the exam. One of my student's mothers asked me if other teachers have given suggestions but the English teacher has not. You can see that only teachers who are not following AA can give suggestions as there is not much to memorize or write essays in the exams. So as I haven't given any suggestion, she got mad cause if the kid does not study who will he still get great grades. However, well educated parents also appreciate AA cause they think that the child is learning without the fear of exams.
15	R	What is your view on the readiness of teachers to use AA in their classroom?
16	P1	The amount of training we get is really limited and only for a few days. With that training this huge change in curriculum and assessment is really hard to deal with. Also even if you understand the concept we can not execute it due to the huge number of students in every class. So not only the teachers but also the students are facing problems.
17	R	Why do you think AA is widely recognised at tertiary level but not at secondary level?
18	P1	One of the main reasons in my opinion is the wage. Teachers at tertiary level earn way more than secondary level. Our salary is very poor. At tertiary level teachers have foreign degrees, they are connected with research works, publications. They are broad minded. They also have way less amount of students to give special attention. Their salary is equivalent to their hard work. But ours are not. When students suffer to learn the alphabet at secondary level we can not really engage them in different works that require spontaneous participation. Even if they want to but they can't express themselves and we are not motivated enough to take special care of those students as the number of students is huge and our salary is low.
19	R	In your opinion what steps can be taken to make assessment more teaching and learning friendly
20	P1	See this assessment system came from the abroad so we need the salary as they pay their teachers. If you get solvency we will actually work hard. Other issues like elaborate training, workshops, maintaining classroom size all these are also important but they come second in my opinion.
21	R	Do you think AA engages teachers and students for successful teaching and learning
22	P1	Yes. it does. Many reputed schools are doing really great with AA. they are managing students, engaging students, teachers are really adaptive. But many schools in rural areas or even cities are not accepting this concept. So I think those schools need special care and monitoring.
23	R	Thank you so much for your time

24	P1	You are welcome.
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Sample of Focused Group Discussion

Moderator	Assalamualaikum, thank you for joining this focused group discussion. I am conducting this discussion to collect data for my Postgraduate final thesis. My thesis is related to alternative assessment and backwash effect. I am exploring aspects that are hindering the implementation of AA. I would like to know your opinion on alternative assessment
Participant 1	I'm against it.
Participant 2	We all are against it <overlap/>
Participant 3	Yes
Participant 1	There is nothing to study and the projects that they are making, they are not doing it on their own. Does he know anything about it? No, he doesn't. Parents are doing it for them
Participant 4	Hmm
Participant 5	Hae
Moderator	So they are not doing it on their own? How are they doing it then?
Participant 5	They are taking help from the internet but still do not understand because there is nothing to study.
Participant 2	They are taking help from google, youtube.
Moderator	How about their skill development?
Participant 1	Government wants the students to be creative and they will do everything on their own but they are not. How will they do it if they do not have knowledge? Nothing is coming from their brain.
Participant 4	The government should have managed training for the parents.
Participant 1	We parents have knowledge, we learned it by studying. But the kids do not have basic knowledge because in this system there is nothing to study. We can do the projects. We used to read a story and write about it. But now there are only two lines given in the book and students have to write what they understand. Is there anything to understand?

Participant 2	I think this system is good for upper level students. But not for class 6 students.
Participant 3	I think this is a part of the experiment. Every year there is an experiment with the kids. Creative questions were good because students studied and then they expressed their opinion.
Participant 4	Yes, creative questions were good. My daughter did really good in creative questions
Participant 5	Yes there was a passage, you read it, you understood it and then you wrote about it. <overlap/>
Participant 1	There is nothing to understand or learn
Participant 2	This is all deceiving <overlap/>
Participant 3	Studies are totally off at home
Participant 4	Yes I can't tell my kid to study. He would say what will I study <overlap/>
Participant 1	I asked my kid to do the homeworks. He said what homework?
Participant 2	Previously there were assignments like memorizing an essay, there is nothing.
Moderator	How are their assessments going on then?
Participant 2	We still do not know that yet. My son is in class six. It's different from the previous year. But from the news I learned that 50% will be final and 50% will be this assessment. Projects, papers and so on.
Moderator	Okay so, previously students used to be afraid of exams
Participant 1	They are not now <overlap/>
Moderator	Students used to memorize due to the fear of exams but they were not excited about learning. Do you think this has gotten better?
Participant 2	They don't even have exams
Participant 4	Yes there is no exam
Participant 5	Yes. It is like they are going to school. Just going to the school
Participant 1	Students are liking it. They have no study
Moderator	So what are the students' reactions?
Participant 2	They are not understanding the gap. They are lagging behind
Participate 1	Kids of this age will not be aware of their future.

Participant 2	They do not understand that they could have learnt something. Time is running by.
Participant 3	They do not understand anything.
Participant 1	Then again, they will give a project one day before submission. And then the students will work till 3 to 4 am and we parents have to help them.
Moderator.	So in your opinion which assessment is better?
Participant 1	Exam based assessment.
Participant 2	Yes exam based assessment was good at least they learnt something.
Participant 3	Exam, creative question based exams were better <overlap/>
Participant 4	Yes <overlap/>
Participant 5	Hum exams <overlap/> student could learn
Moderator	This assessment is inspired from assessments abroad. Some of the teachers that I interviewed said that they have to focus on a large number of students.
Participant 2	Yes it's tough for them too <overlap/>
Moderator	However one of the teachers said students have developed their skill quite well. Especially speaking skill. They can now communicate in english.
Participant 2	I always say that the initiative of the government is great. It's really impressive. But it's not happening properly. I have relatives abroad, they are learning this way and they are doing really well. They are developing skills.
Participant 1	But they can not do it properly. They are showing that they are implementing it. If they could do it as in other countries then it would be really good.
Participant 3	Kids abroad are really smart. But ours are not.
Participant 4	Yes we can not just compare with them. They have been learning like this since childhood.
Moderator	Hum. in your opinion what steps can be taken to make it appropriate for Bangladeshi context?
Participant 1	They should have done it gradually and step by step.
Participant 4	Yes exactly.
Moderator	Like 80%, 20% and then gradually developing it
Participant 3	Yes. they have to start from the beginning. From the playground.

Participant 1	They should not introduce it to class 7 or 8
Moderator	Any good aspect of this AA?
Participant 4	Yes students like it
Participant 2	I really like the presentation part. My kids are not afraid of presentations.
Participant 1	I have taught my kids english speaking from their childhood so they do not face problem regarding speaking.
Moderator	The students from govt schools, especially in rural areas are struggling. What are your views on this?
Participant 4	Yes those students are really struggling
Participant 1	Yes they are not understanding. Or studying
Participant 2	We have to buy a lot of things for our kids to do their projects but a lot of family may not afford it
Participant 5	It's a pressure for the guardians. <overlap/>
Participant 2	Poor students will not be able to do the projects properly and get good grades.
Participant 3	Yes, the grading is confusing as well.
Moderator	I found out from the interviews of the teachers that the group for group work is created with two good students and two students who are struggling.
Participant 2	I still do not understand the grading. <overlap/>
Participant 1	Triangles are he best garde and then squares and then circles
Participant 3	This grading is also not done properly because the good students have to do all the work and and the inattentive students do not do anything but they get the same grade
Participant 2	Yes my kid has to prepare the whole thing
Participant 4	Yes, ?? <overlap/>
Participant 1	The assessment is not done properly. There is no training.
Participant 4	There is training like acting and the senior teachers are acting like birds, frogs. This is humiliating. This is not even a story from our culture. They included Indian culture

Participant 5	There is math about ducks. They thought it through acting. You tell me, should math be taught through acting? But we understand that it's math because our kid has done it.
Moderator	Yes I understand. I am almost done with collecting data. Thank you so much.

Sample Coding

Sample coding of P1 for RQ1- How can AA be beneficial to reduce backwash effect?

Interview question	Subordinate key word of question	Subordinate main point from conversation	Elaborate example from verbal to support the subordinate	Discourse unit
What is your perception on the use of AA in the place of traditional assessment?	Perception on AA	Better than previous pen and paper based exams	The approaches are good and the curriculum is also really good. So even though the whole assessment process is given in the textbook, I at least get the opportunity to use them for my students so it's better than the past assessments.	DU6
Do you think AA can reduce backwash effects? Can you explain please?	AA in reducing backwash effect	Mostly yes but not for everyone	Maybe. But not for everyone. I don't know if you know this or not, but we have to give triangles, squares and circles as grading. As everything is given in the textbook, the solutions are available everywhere like in google, youtube and so on. So if I ask them for example to write the simile from their favorite poem, the majority of them will write the same poem that they found in youtube or google. They are building the habit of copying which is worse than memorizing. However, students who really understand the process are not afraid of exams. We have 4 hours of trial exam sessions so students become familiar with the exam process as well	DU8

What are your students' responses to the use of AA?	Students' responses	Mostly positive but this may not be the case for every school	Well, students love it. They can take part in different projects. They can express their capabilities. But the teachers are struggling as they have to maintain a large number of students and many students do not understand. I believe students from govt schools in rural areas who struggle to identify letters even in secondary level suffer a lot due to this AA as they have to spontaneously perform the tasks. I also have a few of such students even in a school situated in Dhaka city. We have students from different backgrounds. Many guardians of the students are not that well educated. So the students only rely on teachers and we teachers do not have the time to be honest to look after each and every student. So a number of students get square and they do not feel good about it.	DU10
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Sample of Theme Generation

Generating theme for RQ1- How can AA be beneficial to reduce backwash effect?

Interview questions	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9	P10	Themes
What is your perception on the use of AA in the place of traditional assessment?	Better than pen and paper based exams	It develops skill, under privileged schools are suffering	Active participation of students	Different stakeholders are struggling	Practical learning	Good beginning of practical learning	Great change, development	Good for students, pressure on teachers	Students are connecting more with teachers	Positive opinion, real life skill development	Great beginning of practical learning and skill development

Do you think AA can reduce backwash effects? Can you explain please?	Maybe but there are lots of gaps	Yes, if implemented correctly	Yes, as it does not focus on passing the exam	Yes, students try to understand teaching	Yes learning and application of knowledge take place	Yes, but the fear is still there	Yes students are learning by the assessment	Yes but in many places not implemented properly so the pressure is there	Yes students get lots of practice	Yes students can learn rather than being scared of exams	AA significantly reduces backwash effects. Gap between assessment system and implementation
What are your students' responses to the use of AA?	Students love it but many are suffering	Enjoy it but some struggles	Enjoy it, connect with teachers, confidence grew	Love it, but teachers struggle to maintain	More excited now	Most of them love it, inattentive students don't study	Most of them love it	Love it, skill developed, few students struggle	Enjoy it, communicates more	They like it cause they do not have to memorize	Positive response of the students. Struggles of the students and teachers.