CHALLENGES OF E-ASSESSMENT IN EAP CLASSROOM: A STUDY OF STUDENTS' AND TEACHERS' PERCEPTION AT TERTIARY LEVEL

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A thesis submitted to the Brac Institute of Languages in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Master of Arts in TESOL

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Brac University
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Declaration

It is hereby declared that

1. The thesis submitted is my/our own original work while completing a 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 that has been accepted or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.

4. I have acknowledged all major sources of help.

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Approval

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Abstract:

This research aims to explore significant challenges associated with tertiary e-assessments from the perspectives of the students and teachers in EAP classes. At many universities around the world, computers or laptops have been used instead of paper and pencils. The process has facilitated the collection of tasks solved or answered by university students. The majority of developing nations worldwide have recently started to investigate technology-based assessment systems. For these reasons, they have to face some challenges while institutions adapt to e-assessments and switch from traditional systems. Based on the opinions of a small sample of university students picked at random, this research found that e-assessments generated a variety of responses. The results demonstrate that while students understand the value of online tests, they nevertheless have certain apprehensions about them because not all of them are equally proficient in using technology. However, due to the presence of limitations such as plagiarism or technical malfunctions, reliability, and practicality are challenging to incorporate. Further research should also be done to look into other facets of e-assessments in the realm of higher education.

Keywords: E-assessment; EAP Courses; Validity; Reliability; Practicality

Definition of the key terms

E-assessment: "E-assessment" is the term for the practice of "managing and delivering various types of assessment to digitally test learners' knowledge and abilities" (Chen & Tseng, 2019, p. 2).

Validity: The validity of an assessment refers to how well it catches the data it is intended to capture. (Coombe, 2009).

Reliability: The constancy of assessment results obtained at various times is what is meant by reliability (Huges, 2003).

Practicality: According to Khan (2018, p. 34), practicality refers to the tools that instructors and students can use to complete the "activities of preparing, administering, scoring, and applying their assessments."

List of Acronyms

EAP: English for Academic Purposes
F2F: Face-to-Face:

Dedication

My parents deserve all the love, support, and encouragement in the world, so this thesis is their gift from me.

Acknowledgment

I must first and foremost thank Allah (SWT) for assisting me in finishing my thesis and my parents for their unwavering love and support throughout my life. I appreciate you both for giving me the will to aim high and follow my dreams. My husband deserves my heartfelt appreciation as well. I want to express my deep gratitude to my supervisor, Mr. Md. Julhas Uddin, Lecturer of the TESOL Program at the Brac Institute of Languages (BIL), for his direction and encouragement during this study, especially for his belief in me. His suggestions and criticisms were quite helpful to me as I finished the manuscript. Furthermore, I'm grateful to the teachers who served as my incredible mentors and guides in my TESOL sessions, namely Ms. Hasna Khanom, Mr. Harunur Rashid Khan, Dr. Faheem Hasan Shahed, Mr. Zohur Ahmed, and Mr. Mamunur Rashid. Additionally, I want to express my sincere gratitude to all the teachers who helped me with my research by responding to the questionnaire used to gather the data. Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to my family, without whom I would not have been able to finish my thesis.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1

1.1 Introduction

"There is a tsunami coming," declares John Hennessy, the president of Stanford University, "as universities move towards online classes." (Auletta, 2012). Online education will continue to flourish, even though it may slow down as a result of this tsunami's continued existence. Instead of using outdated ways to assess learners' achievement, the majority of universities now use technological examinations (paper tests). (Alruwais, Wills, and Wald, 2018). In higher educational institutions, there are numerous conventional examination strategies for evaluating academic performance, like paper-and-pencil-based examinations, presentations, assignments, and countless more. (Nwosu, 2017). The nature of electronic learning as a method of instruction, the usage of technology, and worries about running out of time and encountering interruptions when attempting to complete e-learning are specifically three important aspects that operate as hurdles to e-learning. (K Becker, C Newton, and S Sawang, 2013). Online learning is undoubtedly a relatively new concept in our educational system, and as a result, both learners and instructors must deal with hurdles when taking online sessions, because we are not accustomed to the procedure. (Gopal et al., 2021). To run educational activities for the first time, both students and teachers in developing nations like Bangladesh employed virtual technologies in addition to the traditional face-to-face sessions where teachers provide lectures (Ramij and Sultana, 2020; Al-Amin et al., 2021). Implementing new virtual courses and test systems presents numerous obstacles for both learners and instructors.(Al-Amin et al., 2021). As is well known, numerous students attend universities to pursue their education in remote regions. It ought to be emphasized that during the epidemic, students returned home and were required to engage in online sessions and assessments from faraway locations.(Ramij and Sultana, 2020). For online sessions and other educational purposes, the majority of learners choose smartphones and laptops.(Ramij and Sultana, 2020; Al-Amin et al., 2021). Bangladesh's internet prices are quite exorbitant, and the majority of its remote regions lack high-speed connectivity like broadband internet access. (Al-Amin et al., 2021). Consequently, due to budgetary constraints, students struggle to afford pricey internet bundles and rely on the excellent internet services offered by cell phone providers. (Rahman, 2019). Furthermore, learners struggle to obtain appropriate internet connections because of inadequate network connections, which impede online learning. (Al-Amin et al., 2021).

1.2 Background and Context

Unquestionably, COVID-19, like many other facets of regular life, has had a profound effect on learners, instructors, and academic establishments everywhere (Mailizar, Almanthari, Maulina, & Bruce, 2020). The outbreak compelled academic institutions all across the world to shut down because then learners might engage in isolation (Toquero, 2020). Nevertheless, a change from a conventional academic setting to a virtual and online learning setting would not be simple. This dramatic transition is currently accompanied by several difficulties and problems (Crawford, Butler-Henderson, Rudolph, & Glowatz, 2020). Academic institutions throughout the world have opted to use the already-available digital technology to create web-based learning content for

students of all academic levels, even though none of them knows when this pandemic will be eliminated.

Activities related to conventional education have been put off before. Conventional teaching practices were severely disrupted by the SARS coronavirus (SARS-CoV) in many nations worldwide, in addition to the H1N1 flu epidemic in 2009. (Cauchemez et al., 2014). This study, like COVID-19, led educational specialists to reconsider F2F learning. They started to investigate virtual teaching as a realistic alternative to leaving the classroom vacancy for up to four months, minimizing the possibility of contamination for learners until rejoining their usual tasks (Kaur, 2020). There are two concerns, even though countless institutions provide e-learning. To start, there is a dearth of information regarding the broader implications and effectiveness of online education (McPherson & Bacow, 2015). Second, varying degrees of success in teaching digitally are likely based on the vast variety of learning objectives that direct our pedagogical and academic objectives (Liguori & Winkler, 2020).

When online learning unexpectedly took off, it became an indicator of internal integration (Wu, 2020), with several educational organizations concentrating more on the conversion of learning materials to the virtual sphere than on the specifics of virtual instructions and presentations. However, it acts as an indicator of the shortage of assets of academic establishments and inequality of learners, wherein limited web connectivity and affordability together with a shortage of reducing technologies reduced institutional readiness and learners' capability to interact in the virtual context. (Zhong, 2020). The lack of sufficient engagement with instructors is a crucial problem with online learning. Furthermore, flaws in any learning content are frequently handled by email with the relevant academic supervisor, requiring responsiveness (Zhong, 2020). Learners who like tactile learning are unlikely to enroll in distance learning. Elearning eliminates a crucial aspect of sociability found in conventional teaching contexts. Since participants only communicate virtually and never in person, meaningful sharing of concepts, information, and expertise is absent in the virtual learning environment. (Britt, 2006).

1.3 Needs and Objectives of the EAP Course

The demand for English for Academic Purposes (EAP) courses in the modern world is not just present in nations where English is commonly spoken as a first language (Haque, 2017, p. 225). Since English is now widely utilized as a language of instruction, even nations like Bangladesh have recognized the need to include EAP courses in their curricula for higher education. Students need to be proficient in all four language abilities (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) since they would be interested in looking for employment or prospects to pursue higher education abroad after completing their undergraduate degrees. Furthermore, the classes aided the students throughout their undergraduate experience.

The following course objectives of one of the EAP courses at the university the researcher selected as a representative of all private universities were requirements for first-year students from all departments.

The courses sought to improve the following:

-students' critical thinking capacity;
-persuasive argument;
-study skills through reading, criticizing, and interpreting texts in speaking and writing;
-students' four language skills
-students' fluency, confidence, and self- and peer-feedback-giving abilities.

1.4 Problem Statement

In the Daily Star, a recent piece titled "E-learning: A boon or a bane?" Mortuza (2021) argued that our education was in crisis because students abused e-assessment and attempted to achieve good results through unfair tactics such as plagiarism. So, through e-assessment, the possibility of investigating students' actual learning could be questioned. Along with that, virtual exams contain drawbacks, including technical glitches that necessitate outsider intervention and the fatigue that arises from using technological resources, among others (Clark et al., 2020). Particularly, with the unexpected epidemic of COVID-19 all over the world, in order to quickly switch to online education, the overall education system had to force academics to provide online sessions. Consequently, this unforeseen storm has produced a slew of issues. Indeed, a comprehensive course framework, audio, and visual material, and managed services resources must always be designed to set up the material for online sessions. In addition to reviewing and upgrading their course materials and delivery strategies, academic institutions must emphasize cloud-based innovations. Faculty experienced challenges regarding online courses, technical assistance, and initial preparedness in contrast to learners (Bao, 2020). The learners were compelled to adopt the emerging e-learning strategies, which lessen face-to-face, individual, and experiential education in institutions (Arora et al., 2021). The rapid acceptance presented a threat, demanding structural adjustments in terms of the innovative instructional strategies involved as well as the requirement to instruct learners to use technological innovations. The open-book exam has indeed entrenched itself as the new norm, and regulating the exam atmosphere has evolved as a concern. One of the toughest obstacles now is, without dispute, the probability of dishonesty on exams.

1.5 Research Questions

The following research topics were consequently the primary focus of this study:

1. What is the perception of the students of EAP courses regarding the challenges of e-assessment?

2. What is the perception of the teachers of EAP courses regarding the challenges of e-assessment?

1.6 Objectives of the Study

This study's aims were as follows:

1. To examine the perception of students of EAP courses regarding the challenges of e-assessment
2. To examine the perception of teachers of EAP courses regarding the challenges of e-assessments.

Chapter 2

Literature review

2.1 The purposes of E- assessment in a language classroom

The use of "digital learning technologies" to organize and deliver various kinds of assessments to assess learners' knowledge and abilities digitally is referred to as "e-assessment."
(Chen & Tseng, 2019, p. 2)
The following elements were mentioned by Khan (2018, p. 2) when talking about the objectives of an assessment:

a. Screening and Identification: To assess the applicability of various curricula in light of the level of student competency.
b. Placement: To identify the knowledge and capabilities of the students and assign them to various levels of teaching within the program.
c. Reclassification or Exit: To decide if students have achieved the goals, learned the material or possessed the required abilities.
d. Monitoring Student Learning: Examining the experience of learning.
e. Accountability: ensuring that learners meet the necessary academic requirements and goals.

2.2 Assessment standards

In light of the fact that this research investigated the consequences of web-based examination concerns on the examination benchmarks, there are vital ingredients for boosting the learning assessment's efficiency. This list includes authenticity, trustworthiness, objectivity, adaptability, and effectiveness (McMillan, 2018). Gay et al. (2011) described authenticity by considering the correctness of actual outcome markers along with related inferences. Menéndez-Varela and Gregori-Giralt (2018) view dependability in light of the absence of flaws or manipulations throughout the assessments. Reliability, in other terms, is the stability of an assessment's outcomes throughout the period. Being fair means ensuring that all learners are similarly influenced by any unimportant elements, including lifetime, sexuality, accent, and health issues (Rasooli et al., 2018). According to the variability concept, which is supported by McMillan (2018), different measuring instruments should be used depending on academic achievement and implementation strategies. In addition to teachers' talents in assessment for learning, effectiveness also takes into account extra infrastructure facilities, expenses, and duration considerations (Looney et al., 2018).

The discipline of web-based evaluation has ascended exponentially since the COVID-19 outbreak. The opportunity for F2F evaluation was eliminated by the fast shift to virtual settings, which also introduced appropriate assessment strategies to multiple settings. The main assessment principles were impacted by some significant threats that had an impact on the assessment's quality.

2.3 The practices of E-assessment in the Bangladeshi context

The hurdles were broken down into three groups: issues with digital technologies, issues with learners, and issues with teaching staff. The IT infrastructure contributes to the effectiveness of digital learning as a whole and the assessment task specifically. Without enough gear, software, and a network connection, the educational process could suffer some major repercussions. To conduct a digital assessment and successfully address educational concerns during this outbreak, Rahim (2020) emphasized the significance of having all required facilities allocated, including a communication network, digital platforms, technical expertise, and equipment.According to Kemp's (2020) projections, 60% of individuals around the globe can get online. Due to inadequate networking, hardware, software, and IT security mechanisms, Tuah and Naing (2021) referred to the worldwide technology framework as "unreliable systems" (p. 63). According to research by Mohmmed et al. (2020) and Slimi (2020), inadequate internet access and IT infrastructure may be the main obstacles to implementing the online assessment correctly. Therefore, the availability of IT infrastructure is the first hurdle in the way of an online learning environment's success. Without the need for a feature like that, making the switch to e-learning and measurement may be quite challenging.

The success of the switch to online learning will largely depend on the learners. But several issues with learners could make this procedure more difficult. The capabilities of the learners, their sense of solitude, their unwillingness to turn on the cameras, and their immoral practices can all be obstacles. Students should have adequate IT and time-management abilities to deal with the assessment requirements in the new setting. Sadly, new research has shown that a large number of students are IT illiterate (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020; Tuah & Naing, 2021). The assessment process may be slowed down by this element, which may also widen the gap between advanced and novice IT users. The inability of learners to manage their time effectively in online assessment environments was another obstacle that evolved, resulting in late submissions and missed opportunities for synchronous assessment activities (Mishra et al., 2020). To plan the appropriate assessment strategies, it is necessary to analyze the entry skills of the learners.

According to Kebritchi et al. (2017), online learners felt alienated from their instructors and classmates. According to Gillett-Swan (2017), students who are learning online report feeling more alone than those who are learning face-to-face. A sense of community and belonging must be generated to enable a unified and appealing online learning experience and to reduce the barriers that online learners frequently face. According to Garcia-Morales et al. (2021), the COVID-19 outbreak made it difficult to design e-learning because of students' feelings of loneliness. This underscores the need to find ways to increase students' involvement and cooperation. Although it seemed like a minor issue that could be overlooked, the earlier information had a big impact. According to Castelli and Sarvary (2021), the unwillingness to activate a webcam or video is a worldwide problem.The investigation also demonstrated that learners' concerns regarding their physical traits, ethnic credentials, slow internet connectivity, and cultural restraints contributed to this rejection. Teachers might be able to overcome this difficulty by taking the time to comprehend students' worries and persuade them to turn on cameras during assessment sessions.

The transparent nature of the online learning environment provides students with a variety of quick ways to get excellent grades. According to Garcia-Morales et al. (2002), cheating has long been a major problem for tutors when evaluating students in online learning environments. Additionally, the main dangers of online assessment environments were impersonation and plagiarism (Peytcheva-Forsyth et al., 2019). The habits of students during synchronous assessment sessions were described by Tuah and Naing (2021), with examples including screen sharing, using multiple screens, Bluetooth headphones, and devices, and sending screenshots to peers. Munoz and Mackay (2019) also identified authenticity as the predominating vulnerable evaluation rule. Menéndez-Varela and Gregori-Giralt (2018) discussed grade inflation and confirmed the negative effects of students' unethical behavior on validity. Grade inflation is the practice of awarding students with extra points that only loosely reflect their true academic performance (Arrafii, 2020). As a result of the deceptive outcomes, these techniques may lead to inaccurate assessments of students' skills and knowledge.

There have been various suggested strategies to control learners' behaviors and lessen their detrimental effects on the educational system. To counter risks to validity and dependability, Rahim (2020) emphasized the significance of implementing preventative measures.Therefore, some investigations have advised using methods for ownership and proof of identity as well as technology for monitoring copies (Peytcheva-Forsyth et al., 2019). More grading scores should be based on formative evaluation, according to Garcia-Pealvo et al. (2021).Additionally, due to final exams' significant downsides, the authors suggested teachers refrain from using them. According to Gamage et al. (2019), it would be a good idea to have a bank of questions so that each student might receive a unique collection of relevant questions. The paper suggested that test takers' questions be mixed up and randomly assigned. Personalizing the assessment process so that students actively participate in contextualized activities is one potential remedy.

The third theme, obstacles facing academic staff, gives a description of the executive problems encountered and the skills needed to control the remote measurement procedure. The experience of the online classroom may be influenced either favorably or unfavorably by the administration of online learning. The success or failure of online programs is determined by how the administration manages online courses. As a result, the academic staff may face difficulties as a result of various administrative actions. Workloads for teachers and high-section enrollments are a couple of these problems. The amount of instruction that academic staff members offer each week is merely one aspect of the teaching workload. The development of the online resources, creating the assessment activities, assisting students, and evaluating the assignments all need more staff time. Communication between teachers and students in face-to-face learning contexts is usually limited to classroom sessions and scheduled office hours.Tyanan et al. (2015) claim that excessive teaching loads on institutional employees lead to significant levels of employee discontent. Additionally, heavy workloads may have unintended effects on effort and expense. (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020). The future and sustainability of e-learning, according to Bright (2012), "depend on instructors managing their e-learning workload properly so that they don't "burn out" from workload expectations" (p. 3). According to institutional personnel, the learning outcomes might only be barely attained if they cut back on their online teaching time (Tyanan et al., 2015). As a result, teaching and learning management should adjust instruction loads to account for the increased duties, support requirements, and communication shifts brought about

by the online space. Another administrative concern is the high student enrollment per section. The administrative efforts to provide additional seats, classrooms, tools, lodging, transportation, and health facilities are unaffected by an increase in the number of students taking online courses. From a tactical standpoint, the faculty members are able to present similar material to any quantity of learners. But Bettinger et al. (2017) highlighted several shortcomings in significant amounts of education. First of all, the institutional authority doesn't foresee teachers reducing the frequency of assessment tasks, the effort wasted judging and providing feedback, or the amount of material presented. Second, the highly demanding learners and numerous discussion postings enhance the possibility of peer disruption. In light of this, it is important to consider the typical number of students taking online courses. According to Large enArzt (2011), between 15 and 22 students should be enrolled at any given time in an online environment. For maintaining the highest levels of learning interactions, Orellana (2009) believed that a class of 16 students was adequate. Therefore, it is important to take into account a suitable average of student enrollment in online courses. The effectiveness of academic personnel can be greatly impacted by several competencies. The lack of certain competencies may result in a mismatch between what the setting requires and what the staff has. The problems related to employee competencies are covered in this section. IT expertise, group project evaluation, practical experience evaluation, online grading, and providing individualized feedback are among these competencies for academic personnel.

Academic staff must be prepared to handle the changes brought about by the shift to online environments, including having an appropriate degree of IT capabilities. According to Govindarajan and Srivastava (2020), some professors who primarily use conventional teaching materials face a digital gap. Because of digital literacy, less skilled employees cannot utilize the skills of digital natives. Beginner teachers and students can readily and swiftly manage technological devices, causing humiliation and tardiness among less-skilled employees. The crucial IT skills required for instructors in online contexts were compiled by Garcia-Morales et al. in 2021. The ability to quickly resolve technical issues during online classes is one of these skills, along with expert hardware equipment skills, particular information technological abilities, adequate control over multiple learning technologies, and quick problem-solving skills. To focus on other essential roles in instruction, academic staff should make sure they have these competencies. Academic staff must also evaluate group projects, which is a challenge. By placing students in groups, the majority of academic staff encourages them to exchange experiences. This encourages students to break down difficult issues into manageable tasks that can be completed in collaboration with one another. The institutional personnel in an e-learning environment, according to Alruwais et al. (2018), finds it challenging to evaluate group work. This problem occurs because the teacher was unsure of the true worth of each team member's contribution. Garcia-Pealvo et al. (2020) established numerous parameters for group sizes in an e-learning context to address the issue of grading group work.

A group of two to four people, for example, could arrange the defense using video conferencing software. For groups of four to fifteen people, a video conference could be used for an oral examination. For groups of varying sizes, ranging from 15 to 40 participants, timed, controlled oral exams are available. A different option is to divide the class into smaller groups of 10 students, who will then conduct and oversee oral exams via a virtual meeting. Finally, big groups of more than 40 students should be broken up and tested using an e-proctored testing method.

The evaluation of practical experiences may also be a major concern for students and teachers, owing to the unforeseen move to e-learning platforms during this epidemic. One of the hardest aspects of online evaluation is this (Osman, 2020). The subjective nature of rating these encounters was cited by Reeves (2000) as a factor in this problem. To assure a reliable measurement of learning outcomes, some writers asserted that hands-on experience should only be demonstrated in a real-world setting (Garca-Pealvo et al., 2020; Phillips & Lowe, 2003). Until students are placed back in real-world physical settings, Leszczyski et al. (2018) recommended enhancing face-to-face experiences. The validity of online evaluation tools for evaluating hands-on experiences was questioned in earlier studies. Consequently, further research is needed to identify alternative methods of evaluating real-world experiences in online settings.

Online grading can sometimes take a lot of time and work. Grading student submissions in online environments are described as difficult by Farooq et al. (2020). The lack of IT abilities, the high number of students in each session, the evaluation of practical experiences, and the evaluation of group projects can all be consequences of other difficulties that can lead to online grading. Furthermore, according to Tuah and Naing (2021), the degree of difficulty rose when higher-order learning objectives were being evaluated. The nature of subjective evaluation and adhering to the guidelines for plagiarism checks are the causes of this challenge. To provide clarity regarding the grade that is obtained and lessen marking conflict, unambiguous rubrics may be used in conjunction with a peer assessment technique. Providing online feedback to specific students could be difficult, even though feedback is unquestionably important in guiding students toward achieving learning outcomes. During the COVID-19 lockout, Abduh (2021) reaffirmed the significance of constructive comments in improving the efficacy of the testing system in online learning while highlighting the incapacity of online learning teachers to offer prompt and helpful feedback. Henderson et al. (2019) further emphasized the need for feedback to be personalized to each student, unambiguous, comprehensive, provide examples, and highlight both the merits and flaws of the submitted work.

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.1 Nature of this research

With the aid of data gathered using a qualitative approach, we can better comprehend a phenomenon by developing a critical grasp of the issue at hand and gaining an in-depth perspective on it (Creswell & Puth, 2017). The nature of this investigation is qualitative. To enable in-depth investigation, data have been gathered through qualitative research. The nature of the research questions in this study seems to fit the qualitative research paradigm better. A quantitative approach may be useful to generalize and determine the trend across many individuals (Fahmida, 2010). It might not be able to examine the topic in detail, though. This study focused on a small number of students and teachers rather than a large population of people. Focused group discussions were the main source of information for the students, and one-on-one interviews with the teachers were used to gather information from them. It seemed more pertinent for our study. It would also be difficult to obtain data from such a large number of participants given the short time frame in which this study was conducted. An in-depth qualitative approach seems natural and acceptable given that this thesis concentrated on a small number of individuals (Creswell & Puth, 2017)

3.2 Data collection and analysis

For this study, 8 students and 4 teachers from 4 privately run universities were chosen as the sample because the researcher wanted to examine how students and teachers perceived the challenges with e-assessment. The sole requirement was that participants have completed at least one EAP course virtually to share better experiences. Two male and six female students, all of whom were between the ages of 20 and 23, took part in the conversation. Three female teachers and one male teacher consented to participate in the interview. Below, a table includes further details of the teacher participants,

Teachers' names	Gender	Number of years active in the teaching profession	Highest level of educational qualification
Teacher 1	female	2 years	M.A. in English
Teacher 2	female	17 years	M.A. in English
Teacher 3	female	3 years 8 months	M.A. in English
Teacher 4	male	7 years	M.A. in English

The researcher set up a focused group discussion with eight participants from various undergraduate semesters and four different universities in Dhaka to gather the answers to the

research questions. Focused group discussions were held, and each participant's permission was obtained before the entire session was recorded. Below, a table includes further details about the student participants:

Name	Age	Gender	semester	Universities' names
S1	22	female	second	A university
S2	23	female	third	B university
S3	22	female	fourth	C university
S4	21	female	fourth	D university
S5	22	male	third	A university
S6	23	male	fifth	D university
S7	23	female	fourth	B university
S8	21	female	fifth	B university

 Focused group discussion, according to Mishra (2016), allows us to examine variables in their natural environments when conducting qualitative research. In FGD, participant interaction is crucial because it enables the researcher to collect data in depth through open-ended questions. It assisted in obtaining data and viewpoints from individuals with comparable backgrounds and experiences, which consequently assisted in discussing a particular issue of interest (Mishra, 2016).

In addition to the FGD, four faculty members from four different private universities participated in interviews. Before sending the Google form, approval from the teachers was obtained once they were briefed about the study. Only when they granted permission did the researcher email them the Google forms and conduct their interviews. Purposive sampling was designed by the researcher to choose both the teachers and the students. It is common practice to discover and choose people or groups of people who seem to have special expertise in or background with such a relevant topic. (Cresswell & Clark, 2011). All of the inquiries made to the instructors and students were open-ended.

A focus group discussion was held for the students. Participants in the FGD are undergraduate students who just completed their online semester. Regarding the teachers, a Google Form with several open-ended questions was created and sent to them ahead of the interviews. The researcher and the teachers sat down for the interview after they completed the forms. Through the interview, the researcher was able to get perspectives and ideas about the challenges with e-assessments. Following the FGD and interviews with students and teachers, transcriptions were created for each student and teacher. The key causes and opinions were then discovered through a theme analysis, which also revealed trends.

Chapter 4

 Findings

1. Adapting to E- assessment

Teacher responses

From the interviews with the teacher, it can be concluded that the transition from a traditional classroom to a virtual classroom radically alters the teaching and learning processes, even though they were prepared to teach online. Since it is their first time connecting with an online environment, they have had trouble adjusting to this trend. Teacher 1 insisted on this: "I think the traditional approach is easier since I can focus my students' attention while keeping an eye on them and exerting control." The adjustment to the new distance learning model of instruction is the most challenging task, according to Teacher 2. The shift to an assessment assignment is difficult for both teachers and students, according to Teacher 3. As a result of all the problems with employing adaptive e-learning, Teacher 4 also wishes to keep using traditional methods of student assessment.

Student's responses

From the focus group discussions, it can be inferred that the adjustment to this new normal circumstance hinders learning, which differs from person to person. "In the confines of a classroom situation, conventional classes provide learners with a hands-on learning opportunity," claimed S1. Along with it, there is face-to-face interaction in the case of offline classes, especially while instruction is simultaneously referred to as S2. Students and instructors have open channels of communication, allowing for lively debates and discussions. Apart from this, in a traditional classroom setting, students can receive instant feedback and answers to their queries, according to S3. Teachers are adapting to different teaching methods to interest students. In addition to engaging in live conversations and debates, it enables students to speak with their instructors directly. Students can also engage in extracurricular activities like painting and physical education, referred to by S4, to further develop their cognitive and motor skills.

2. Learners' unethical practices

Teacher responses

According to the interview, Teacher 1 emphasized how challenging it is to monitor student dishonesty, particularly when it involves impersonation or late submission. Fairness is in danger, according to Teacher 2, when cheating becomes normalized in the internet world. Teacher 3 noted, "There is a considerable risk of cheating through an online assessment when students perform the online test." Finally, online cheating and plagiarism, which Teacher 4 highlighted as two of the major issues with an online assessment, may be caused by a lack of trustworthiness in online examinations.
Students' responses

As a result of the open-book examination and the 24-hour deadline for submission of the assignment, S3 stated in the focus group that most students simply copied and pasted content from the internet. S5 further stated that some students chose to collaborate with those taking the same exam even though they were afraid of being caught when the exam's time limit was cut from 24 hours to only six. "We didn't feel awful because most of my peers were doing the same and even went as far as asking around for answers to things they didn't know how to do," S6 remarked. S8 stated, "If I have to cheat to pass the exam, it defeats the purpose of studying." I believe that the objective of assessments is to test what you genuinely know and have learned from the course.

3. Refusal to turn on cameras in online sessions

Turning off cameras in an online class is a severe issue that raises questions about authenticity, according to Teacher 1. For the teacher to maintain eye contact with the class, Teacher 2 recommended that students switch on their cameras during live instruction. In a live class, Teacher 3 claimed that by "turning off cameras," students benefit from it and engage in other activities under the pretense of participating in the lesson. Teacher 4 onwards: "According to my understanding, it depends on culture, and students who are asked to participate might feel nervous while being observed."

Students' responses

A student's habit of "turning off cameras in the live class" can be inferred from the focus group conversation. According to S1, "that is our cultural norm, and out of shyness, we turn off our cameras." According to S5, "some students are introverted and tend to disguise their existence since they believe their participation would be hindered if they were actively monitored." S7 claimed, "I found the live class monotonous and took a nap or engaged in other activities, taking advantage of the opportunity to mute and turn off cameras." S2 remarked that we don't open the camera and remain silent during live sessions unless the teacher asks us to do so. S8 believed that this online platform is the best tool for students to stay in the live session even when they are occupied with other activities because the recorded session serves as a backup.

4. Reponses to online tests and assignments

Teacher responses

According to Teacher 1, "the performance depends on their competency, and it functions as Krashen input hypothesis "i+1" as a consequence." Teacher 2 further explained the fact that "this online assessment is challenging for the students and teachers who have a lack of technical understanding." Teacher 3 additionally assessed the four study skills (reading, writing, speaking, and listening abilities) in the formative and summative assessments in an EAP course, which is difficult on an online platform and requires more effort and time from the teacher. Finally, Teacher 4 asserted that "I prefer to continue using traditional techniques of assessing my students owing to all of the challenges faced with using online evaluation." The traditional approach is, in my opinion, simpler because I can simultaneously observe, instruct, and monitor my students.

Students' responses

S1 stated that we take part in presentations, open-book exams, and quizzes. Some students confidently perform the assignments, but both students and teachers need to have a backup plan in case there are any problems with the software, hardware, or even the internet. S3 added that in our regular classes, we conduct midterm or final tests based on our grasp of the material, which is easier than this type of open-book exam because most students copy answers from the internet. The effectiveness of the teacher's teaching methods heavily influences student performance in exams. S5 stated that during a presentation, the learner refuses to open the camera and thus delivers their speech spontaneously, but the truth is that during a presentation, identifying body language is impossible.

5. Technical glitches

Teacher responses

It was possible to infer from the interview that technical issues and a lack of technological resources constituted the majority of the difficulties experienced by both teachers and students. How can I guarantee that all students have access to the internet and the technological devices they need, such as laptops or tablets, to access online courses?, asked Teacher 1. Teacher 2 discovered that "poor and inconsistent internet connection" was the interviewees' top concern. Teacher 3 observed that adult learners frequently struggle with assignment writing or the use of Excel. Teacher 4 highlighted the need to educate both students and teachers about the fundamentals of using technology in the course.

Students' responses

The focus group discussion revealed that practically everyone in today's society possesses a laptop, a smartphone, or both. Online learning is advantageous for everyone as long as they are at least somewhat tech-savvy, as stated by S1. On the other hand, S2 noted that there is still a sizable community of people who either lack access to these gadgets or are unfamiliar with how to use the internet. S4 stressed that e-learning will continue to be inaccessible to everyone as long as this gap exists. S5 contends that e-learning should be viewed as a supplement to conventional education rather than as a substitute. S7 emphasized the need for institutions to provide a foundational ICT course at the tertiary level so that students could complete their assignments with ease.

6. Large enrollment of students

Teacher responses

Teacher 1 discovered that the shift from traditional to online classes increases their burden since they must develop authentic resources and question papers based on the learners' needs analysis. According to Teacher 2, a huge number of students per section impacted the smooth running of the class work and activities. Teacher 3 emphasized that the capabilities of the physical framework, such as classrooms, ICT laboratories, student housing, etc., are not a concern in an online learning environment. In an e-learning context, it is recommended to limit student selection between 15 and 22 (Arzt, 2011), and the instructional load should not be higher than it would be in a face-to-face setting, according to Teacher 4.

Students' responses

Adding additional sections has little impact on the learning process, which is more feasible than in a physical classroom setting, according to S1. Conversely, S2 made the point that having more students puts the academic staff under pressure when it comes to evaluating group work. S4 added that, in comparison to regular classes, creating online evaluation tools requires more time and effort. S4 determined that the instructor is under pressure to evaluate learning outcomes in the online learning environment due to additional sections or huge student enrollment.

7. Feeling of isolation in online session

Teacher responses

Teacher 1 said that one way to lessen isolation is that "the structured tactics used in this online learning process make it easier for teachers and students to interact; he further stated that pupils will become actively engaged in online activities if peer and self-assessment systems are introduced." Teacher 2 claimed that it is challenging to develop efficient student participation tactics since the online environment does not genuinely guarantee student connection as well as collaborative learning. The management of time is another issue, as Teacher 3 noted: "First-year students take much time to get familiar with and comfortable with online learning, let alone assessment." They are not taught how to use evaluation techniques in online learning environments, which would encourage contact between S-S or T-S and lessen isolation, according to Teacher 4.

Students' response

S1 stated that because we take our studies home, we are separated from our classmates and experience feelings of isolation. S5 noted that students benefit greatly from spending time with their peers. S7 claimed that due to the distance, there are fewer in-person interactions between students and teachers in online classes. S4 emphasized that it is the responsibility of the instructor to impart techniques to facilitate S-S or S-T interaction, which will lessen feelings of isolation. S2 stated that peer feedback techniques work well to encourage S-S engagement.

Chapter 5

Discussion

The current investigation has identified several important difficulties that need to be managed. Among these issues were the number of participants' amount for each section, the trouble of teaching, deception, the length of time needed to create virtual measurement instruments, a lack of integrity, trying to assess some student performance, falsification, test scores, and the learners' hesitancy to switch on their cameras. Bangladeshi students' unwillingness to switch on cameras during virtual class meetings is due to cultural constraints. This result supported Slimi's (2020) findings, which suggested that cultural factors may have contributed to the non-use of cameras during online conferences. More complicated problems exist than simply turning on a camera for no reason. Assuring learner identity, maintaining eye contact, reading facial expressions, adding oversight value to the evaluation, and reducing alienated pressure are all made possible by turning on cameras for academic staff. Students' cameras should be on during remote learning, according to Castelli and Sarvary (2021), for a variety of reasons, including to broaden the scope of the learning process, enhance the effectiveness of the lesson, foster relationships between the teacher and students, and lessen feelings of isolation. Once explicit strategies are communicated to learners at the start of the session, this resistance may eventually fade. Thus, more investigation into the factors influencing students' reluctance to activate their webcams during virtual class sessions will allow educators to discover meaningful data and establish tactics to urge learners to switch on their webcams throughout online courses. Chuah and Mohamad's research (2020) is supported by the difficulties of severe instruction pressure and the proportion of learners in each division. The capabilities of the physical framework, such as classrooms, ICT laboratories, accommodations for pupils, and their movement, need not be a concern for the educational administration in an online learning environment. Online courses were easier to manage from a management standpoint than face-to-face courses when it came to introducing additional sections and more students per section. However, the academic staff may face significant difficulties as a result of these choices. According to recommendations, the amount of student recruitment in web-based courses should be kept between 15 and 22 (Arzt,

2011), and the workload of the instructors shouldn't be more than it would be in a classroom (Bright, 2012).

Due to their practical nature, some learning outcomes are challenging to measure. Validity, dependability, and fairness are fundamental assessment concepts that are directly threatened by these difficulties at such a serious level (Menéndez-Varela & Gregori-Giralt, 2018; Munoz & Mackay, 2019; Tuah & Naing, 2021). The assumptions drawn from the students' results have an impact on validity. The quality of the entire educational system is ultimately hurt since degree holders are usually portrayed as having deceptive cognitive capacity, physical attributes, talents, and dispositions. Another risk in the online context is that academic staff have trouble juggling the assessment procedures that effectively evaluate their institutional achievement on the one side and the tactics that work outstandingly in the online environment on the other (Phillips & Lowe, 2003). Menéndez-Varela and Gregori-Giralt (2018) claim that emphasizing the virtual criteria rather than the learning goals reduces internal consistency and enhances reliability. Because of their long-standing interdependence, neither principle should be given up to advance the other. In other words, just because the majority of students had high grades and there was tremendous consistency in their scores, it doesn't necessarily suggest that they all understood the learning objectives. It can imply that some undiscovered dangers need to be uncovered and exposed. It is possible to lessen the severity of these challenges by considering the current evaluation procedures and implementing alternative assessment methods. Righteousness is only possible if authenticity and credibility are ensured, according to Kunnan's (2004) fairness evaluation framework.

The results of Alruwais et al. (2018) are supported by the fact that there were other significant difficulties with evaluating the group's work and the dedication needed to construct online assessment instruments. Efficiency is impacted by these two problems (Looney et al., 2018). To satisfy the staff's professional development demands, the educational administration must construct those needs. While reported as moderate issues in previous national and international research, some difficulties were harming both students and academic personnel (Chuah & Mohamad, 2020; Mohmmed et al., 2020; Slimi, 2020). Participants' issues had a direct impact on the impartiality (Rasooli et al., 2018; Tierney, 2012) along with diversity (McMillan, 2018;

Reeves, 2000) doctrines. As a result, before the semester begins, it is endorsed to do a detailed needs analysis of the learners' demands.

Academic staff performance during online assessments may be impacted by the difficulties of being new to technology, online grading, and giving comments to students. By showing that the academic staff invests a lot of time and effort into grading assignments and providing insightful feedback, the qualitative data lend credence to the literature. Rahim (2020) emphasized how crucial it is to give students high-quality criticism in online assessments. To strengthen individuals' comprehension of the expected effect and drive them to perform well in the final exam, it is critical to recognize that scores during formative testing must be reinforced by comprehensible input. The assessment's efficiency principle is reflected in these staff-related issues (Looney et al., 2018).

The first step in overcoming staff challenges is to increase academic staff and educational administration awareness of the effectiveness of evaluation. The fairness, variability, and efficiency aspects of evaluation were thus still impacted even when some difficulties were of low intensity. The learners' absence was positioned as a challenge at a level that was just a little difficult. In online courses, difficulties with student attendance were therefore not a major concern. "The benefits of numerous modalities, online support tools, and fast feedback are regarded as having the possibility of boosting learner control, motivation, and autonomy," according to Trinder (2002) (p. 69). It would appear that any attempt to design an engaging learning environment for digital learners must include the components of mobility and immediate online evaluation.

Chapter 6

Conclusions and Recommendations

According to the results, several significant problems needed to be solved. First and foremost, it's important to inspire the students; therefore, have them turn on their webcams throughout any virtual meetings to add intellectual intrigue. In addition to the added pressure on teachers to create online tests that will be used to evaluate group projects for a substantial range of students in each division, these criteria should also be taken seriously. Employ significant action against dishonesty and deception while also enhancing academic achievement and lessening grade turbulence. Online evaluation has a significant impact on learning environments, which is beyond dispute. As a result, it's important to address the online assessment's validity, effectiveness, fairness, variability, and dependability principles. The difficulties with each appropriate assessment standard were grouped in this study to offer theoretical value to the literature on online assessment. Each assessment standard needs to be thoroughly reviewed to find any impending hazards.

Academic staff should refrain from using a single, heavily weighted technique for summative evaluation due to the discovered difficulties of an online assessment. It is preferable to give different formative assessment procedures more weight when grading students. To lessen the chance of duplication and improve the authenticity and trustworthiness of the entire assessment approach, the investigation also recommended implementing a variety of different evaluation methodologies embedded in the online course activities. Another suggestion is for academic personnel to create and modify assessment tools that call for students to provide evidence of their learning of new skills and knowledge. Instructors must carefully attend to each instance that presents a challenge, especially those involving students from underprivileged backgrounds, those with special needs, or those who reside in remote areas. For academic staff to track each student's learning progression within each section and give them the required feedback to profit from online courses, it is also critical to limit the amount of work that goes into teaching and the number of students in each section. When developing materials and activities for online courses, instructional designers should take the state of the IT infrastructure and the speed of internet connections into account. Several problems with online testing were discovered in this study. So

it is important to investigate the causes of each of these difficulties. Therefore, it is possible to suggest and evaluate solutions for each unique problem. Despite several shortcomings that must be carefully evaluated, the online evaluation was a useful rescue solution. To convey this innovative experience to similar future crises worldwide, human efforts must be united and concentrated.

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Appendix

Focus group discussion questions list:

1. Is "adapting to online assessments" challenging or not? Share your experience.

2. Explicitly justify your position. Which statement, "Students usually plagiarize in exams," do you agree with or disagree with?

3. What do you make of the claim that students won't let cameras in because of cultural norms? Please explain the reasons for your decisions.

4. Do learners respond spontaneously and confidently to assignments and examinations? Give examples from your experience.

5. Students' lack of technological proficiency causes late submission of online assignments, do you agree or disagree? Give example from your experience

6. Do you agree or disagree that having a large number of learners in a class can affect how much is learned? Describe your preferences and give explanations.

7. Do you agree or disagree that students in online classes feel alone and unsupported? Provide an anecdote from your own life.