Adaptation of the Assessment Processes and its Impact on Learners: During and Post-Covid19 Situation in Bangladesh

By

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Declaration

It is hereby declared that

1. The thesis submitted is my/our 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/We have acknowledged all main sources of help.

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Approval

The thesis titled "Adaptation of the Assessment Processes and its Impact on Learners: During and Post-Covid19 Situation in Bangladesh" submitted by Rezuana Tabassum (18103032) in May, 2022 has been accepted as satisfactory in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in English on 28th May, 2022.

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Ethics Statement

I, Rezuana Tabassum, testify that all the works included in this dissertation are original works resulting from my knowledge and interest. All the information mentioned from other academic journals, news articles, and materials used in this research has been acknowledged properly through proper citation. While gathering data from the participants as well as a sample paper for this research, I followed all the ethical considerations as taught. I, hereby, proclaim that I have not submitted this research work as a whole nor a chapter, formerly not in a parallel way in this or any other university.

Abstract

In our country, the long-established face-to-face assessment process shifted to an online mode due to the pandemic. However, teachers and the authority could not apply that established method during the remote assessment. To assess students' knowledge, they started to take assignments that were assigned by the teachers. Besides assignments, teachers used continuous assessment procedures to assess learners' knowledge. The assessment process changed again when the pandemic's intensity started to cool off and everything was gradually returning to its place. Therefore, this study focuses on the two aspects of English assessment at the junior secondary level of Bangladesh; one is the adaptation of the assessment process of English throughout the pandemic as well as in the time of post-pandemic transition and another aspect is the impact it had on students and teachers during the same period. This study is accomplished by following a qualitative research approach. All data has been collected by interviewing participants and analysed through thematic analysis. The participants are teachers and students of junior secondary level in Bangladesh. The results are reported under the following themes; i) Adaptation of Assessment Process ii) Different types of Assessments and iii) Impact of the assessment. Moreover, this study offers a brief discussion on these themes, for instance, it talks about how teachers and learners have adapted to all new assessment processes during the pandemic and in the transition to post-pandemic. Then it focuses on the types of assessments English teachers have followed in online mode as well as after the pandemic. Lastly, this study explains the impact alternative assessments had during the pandemic and are now in the post-pandemic transition period. It also examines both the positive and negative impacts of the assessment methods applied by our institutions.

Keywords: Pandemic; Junior Secondary Level; Online-assessment; Post-Pandemic-assessment.

Dedication

I would like to dedicate my work to those people who are still staying strong and upright

despite being surrounded by chaos.

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Acknowledgement

Table of Contents

List of Acronyms

CLT   Communicative Language Teaching

JSC   Junior School Certificate

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Background of the story

In many countries' education systems, 'Assessing' learners is a crucial event that plays a significant role in the whole process of teaching and learning. Assessment is not a distinct element rather it is a process to reveal students learning status. Besides, it allows teachers to find out the teaching outcome to improve or modify the process of educating Learners.

During the time of pandemic, the educational sector has faced the worst consequences of the outbreak of the Covid19 pandemic. On top of it, those countries that do not have enough resources to tackle this situation are at a loss for constructing their future generation through Education. Though the tertiary level of Bangladesh was able to continue with their education system by modifying it according to the need, however, the junior secondary level could not continue with their education for the first year of the pandemic. As for the second year, schools barely conducted classes without taking exams because schools went for online education and adapted new assessment methods to assess students' knowledge that have a significant impact on the students' learning and further life.

Furthermore, another issue is assessing the knowledge of English. Although the subject 'English' is CLT-based, there is no attempt to incorporate assessment tasks to evaluate four language skills (Speaking, Listening, Reading, and Writing) in the English language. Only reading and writing have been implemented properly from the beginning of the CLT-based education system in our country. Even in COVID19, the scenario was the same or maybe a bit worse than the usual time and teachers are going through a stressful phase to set everything in place for ensuring students learning.

Therefore, this thesis identifies the adaptation process of the English assessment methods during the recent pandemic as well as in the transition to post-pandemic; however, the sudden changes in assessment process left positive and negative impacts on the student and teacher which have been discussed in this study as well.

1.2 Junior Secondary level of education

In Bangladesh, class 6 to class 8 is considered as junior secondary level. Students from 11 to 13 (plus) years old are mostly going through this level of education. This is the most crucial stage of our education system as students gradually transition from primary to secondary level. Teachers provide an advanced level of knowledge regarding grammar and other aspects of the English language step by step throughout the whole process of completing these levels. Students learn and are encouraged to develop creative writing in English rather than memorizing everything.

Moreover, assessing tasks help to reinforce learning further. At this point giving input with proper teaching is the main concern for a better output through assessments. During this phase, students' knowledge increase to the extent that after going through Class 6, 7, and 8, they can choose their preferred division such as science, arts or comers. Furthermore, these stages not only develop students in terms of educational knowledge, but also make them grow mentally and physically fit for some of their future aspects of life. Thus, the junior secondary level is a transition period for students which progresses through the teaching-learning and assessing process.

1.3 Assessment process of junior secondary level of education

Before COVID19, assigning assessments 1 of Classes 6, 7 and 8 depended on the school teachers and authority's decision except for the finals of class 8. The final exam of class 8 is fixed because students of class 8 are required to sit for JSC (Junior School Certificate) exams.

Though the allocated marks for each task varied from each institution, other than that all the assessment methods, tasks and topics were the same for assessing students. For instance, assignments, class work, homework, class tests, midterm, and finals are common in all schools. However, the only difference is the quantity of each type of assessment and the marks allocation of every subject. Therefore, English as a subject is not an exception. On top of it the tasks and assessment methods are to evaluate students reading and writing skills where speaking and listening skills are neglected thoroughly; especially in public schools.

Nevertheless, unlike classes 6, 7 and mid-8, the question pattern of the JSC examination is fixed as it is a national examination. The pattern is given below:

Part A,B,C,D	Tasks& allocated marks for each (English) (till 2019 and 2022)		Total marks 100
Part A (1st) Reading Comprehension	1. MCQ	7marks	20 marks
	2. Answer the following questions	8 marks	
	3. Fill in the gaps with meaningful words	5 marks	
Part B 1st paper	1. Complete the grid below with appropriate information	5 marks	25 marks
	2. True False	5 marks	
	3. Fill in the gaps (with clues)	5 marks	
	4. Fill in the gaps without clues	5 marks	
	5. Match the sentence with columns A and B	5 marks	

Part C Grammar 2nd paper	1. Fill in the gaps with suitable suffixes, prefixes or both	5 marks	25 marks
	2. Fill in gaps with articles	5 marks	
	3. Changing sentences	5 marks	
	4. Change the form of speech	5 marks	
	5. Use capital letters	5 marks	
Part D Composition part	1. Make a dialogue	10 marks	30 marks
	2. Email	10 marks	
	3. Paragraph	10 marks	

For the JSC exam, teachers evaluate and give scores by following the grading policy they have been provided by the Government.

1.4 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study is to find alternative assessment methods that the government and schools have come up with for the English subject during the pandemic as well as post-pandemic. Also, everything related to the assessment is interconnected to the teaching and learning outcome; therefore, this study has also shaded light on it. Moreover, this study also intends to find how positively this method has impacted learners and because of it what are the consequences everyone is facing across the country. Besides positive impacts, there are negative impacts as well which I have intended to find through this study for the readers to understand both aspects of its impact.

1.5 Research questions

1. How have teachers adapted the assessing process during COVID19 as well as in the period of post-pandemic?

2. How have students adapted the assessing process during the pandemic along with post-pandemic?

3. What are the impacts of the assessment process on teachers and learners??

1.6 Limitation of the study

As during my research people were stuck at home due to lockdown and had various issues going on in their lives so I could not find more participants for this study. Also, some of my participants, especially teachers, could not sit for a face-to-face interview due to their busy schedules with schools reopening. For this reason, each of the teachers gave an interview over the phone as well as submit a written response to my interview questions. Therefore, I felt that I could not fully take advantage of their participation and was unable to gather more important information from them. Another limitation is that there are few journals (secondary resources) on this study in the context of Bangladesh or there are some papers which required money to get it. Thus, as a student, I could not avail that and to some extent, the absence of a good number of journals can be seen in the literature section.

1.7 Significance of the study

The significance of this study is that one can get an overall idea about students' struggles, lacks and needs related to assessment. Thus, this study will help teachers to fill the gaps by considering what could have been done. Therefore, teachers will try to modify their way to assess students by keeping in mind some core points to help students with their further struggles step by step in the post-pandemic period.

1.8 My observation as a student and home tutor

Being a university-level student, I found that tertiary-level education has done a remarkable job despite failing in a few situations However, as a home tutor, my experience was quite different. The scenario of schools is not much pleasing in terms of teaching-learning and assessment. Most importantly, the part of the assessment was not up to the mark. It felt that all assignments are only for engaging students with their studies but not for actual learning. Also, schools conducting online classes had quite a lot of issues to address. Besides, school teachers were not groomed to teach and assess students in special circumstances, for which they lack knowledge and experience that is reflected in students learning.

Chapter 2

Methodology of the Research

2.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodology of this study including research design, participants, data collection and analysing procedure. Under the data collection procedure, I have briefly discussed the ethical considerations that I have taken into account.

2.2 Research Design

This research has been conducted based on qualitative research due to its great advantage of bringing out in-depth information. I have used a semi-structured interview process along with some writing samples. To begin with my research, I formed research questions that helped me to structure my thesis topic. The rationale behind selecting this topic is the recent circumstances in the educational sector during the pandemic as well as post-pandemic. The most crucial part is the current situation of the assessing process at the junior secondary level. For this study, there are three main research questions; such as 'how have teachers adapted assessing style during COVID19 as well as in the transition period to post-pandemic?' 'How have students adapted learning and assessing style during the pandemic as well as post-pandemic?' 'What are the impacts of it on learners?

Next, I choose suitable participants for interviews who provided me with the necessary information. Lastly, I analyzed all information thoroughly by following the thematic analysis process.

2.3 Participants

The participants for this research are teachers and students of junior secondary level. The reason behind choosing this level of students and teachers is that this is a crucial stage that

makes the transition from primary to secondary level smoother for students. The junior secondary level consists of three grades such as class 6, class 7, and class 8. During this time students learn English grammar gradually from intermediate to advance levels. This level of students and teachers can provide more in-depth information regarding assessments during the time of pandemic and also during the transition period to post-pandemic. Here, by analyzing information, I can find participants learning status and their challenges and improvement during 2020-2021.

Again, teachers of the same level need to be more strategic to teach and assess students of junior secondary level to minimize the one-year study gap and provide assistance. Hence, participants have provided data that may give great insight into this matter. The teachers have also provided information about the challenges they faced during online education and about the necessary measures they think should be taken now.

Moreover, I choose participants from the same as well as different schools. The participants' names are given in the table below:

Student	School and Class	Teacher (English)	School and class
Maliha Shimu	Class 6 Nagar Govt. Girls High School	Mrs Orpita	Class 6, 7 and 8 Nagar Govt. Girls High School
Promi Tnisha Sara Ruqaia	Class 7 Nagar Govt. Girls High School	Mrs Ruhi	Class 6, 7 Zilla School
Sadia	Class 8		

Tania Sabreena Moumita	Manik foundation School and Collage		
Sadman	Class 8 Zilla School		

2.3 Data collection procedure

2.3.1 Introduction

I interviewed two teachers over the phone as they were unable to allocate time for face-to-face sessions with me due to the pandemic. Hence, I have asked questions as precisely as possible to get the necessary data for 2020-2021 and early 2022. In addition to a phone interview, they have given written answers to some of my questions.

Next, I interviewed students of each class together to collect data for two years through the Zoom platform. I have asked them questions that are related to the second and third research questions.

First of all, for the interview, I contacted them before the day of the interview and prepared interview questions beforehand. I have used a semi-structured interview approach. Then each class and teacher was interviewed on a different day. Interview sessions were started by asking about their educational background and then gradually moved further. Whenever I needed more information, I asked them follow-up questions. After that when I felt no new information was coming from the interview, I ended the interview and recorded everything on Zoom immediately to preserve the data.

I have collected assignments that students have done during the pandemic along with their final examination questions and given marks.

2.3.2 Ethical consideration

As for the ethical aspect of my research, I have asked permission from the authority beforehand for collecting sample assignments to use. As per their requirement, I can use those to analyze but cannot write anything from those assignments in this paper. Therefore, I have only used it to analyze and refrain from using any data directly in my thesis.

Next, for the interview, I have taken the consent of all my participants and ensured that they are allowing me to interview them without any pressure. They asked me not to use their real name, designation, and other personal information. Therefore, as per their request instead of their formal name I have used pseudo names.

Lastly, I have given proper credit to all the rightful owners of each secondary resource which I have used throughout this paper.

2.4. Data analysis

This section discusses the steps that have been followed to analyze the collected data which I have obtained from interviews and students' writing.

2.4.1 Data Analysis Framework

To establish research work, a framework is necessary for analyzing data which can lead to proper data analysis. According to Boyatzis, thematic analysis is a systematic process of arranging qualitative data into themes that require "an explicit" encoding procedure (1998, p.4). Thus, the steps I have followed are given below.

The Framework for Analyzing Data of the Study

Research Question	Sources of Data	Data Analysis		Findings &Discussion
		Coding	Creating categories and themes	Showing founded data &Interpreting results in the light of scholarly literature
RQ1 RQ3	Teacher's interview	Verbatim Transcription, Coding.	Generating categories and themes	
RQ2 RQ3	Students Interviews and writing samples	Verbatim Transcription, Coding. Comparing their writing sample with one of their guide book as well as interview speech		

Here, I have collected data from two sources; one is an interview and another is a writing sample (Assignment and Final answer script) of the students. The interview is analyzed by applying verbatim transcription.

2.4.2 Analysing interviews

After taking the interview I followed verbatim transcription for my participants in each class. Here, first of all, from all the transcriptions, I coded and selected the most prominent codes. After that, I categorized all codes into categories and put the categories into a specific sub-theme. From the sub-themes, I have finally found some prominent themes. Below, a

sample structure of the table is given that I have used to find themes and answers to each research question.

Table 1

Themes from the interviews of RQ1, RQ2, RQ3				
Name of participants	Code and DU	Category	Sub-theme	Theme

2.4.3 Analysing writing samples

I have collected my participants' assignments and final answer scripts of each class that they have done during the pandemic as well as in the post-pandemic transition period. There were no marks allocated for their assignments only four-category to give remarks. For analyzing these writing samples of the students, I have looked at whether they have applied their current knowledge of English grammar, produced sentences with errors or not, have shown creativity and analysis to complete all English assignments, or have done plagiarism and copied from the internet and form other students. I have tried to see if they have properly covered all the points and the questions that are required for writing appropriate English and stayed within the content or not. Moreover, in the final answer script, I tried to find grammatical errors, all the mistakes they made in every task and marks to see what kind effect of online teaching left on them.

2.4.4 Analysing Final Question and Grades

I have analyzed the question paper by looking at the allocated marks for English first and second papers. Then, I also try to find whether students' assignments were helpful for their final exam or not. The question papers carried 50 marks; 20 for the first paper, 20 for the

second, and 10 for a paragraph. This marks distribution is for classes 6 and 8. As for class 7, they emphasized more English first paper-30 marks and second paper-20. Finally, I looked at their grades to find their performance in each part.

Chapter 3

Review of Relevant Literature

3.1 Introduction

The primary focus of this study is to find out the adaptation strategy for the assessment process and discuss its impact on the teachers and learners during Covid19 and through the transition to post-Covid19. This chapter hence discusses scholarly works, related to the adaptation strategy of the assessment process along with its impact during the pandemic and through the transition to post-pandemic. As the assessment cannot be possible without teaching-learning, therefore, literature related to those has also been mentioned in this section for the readers to get a better overview of all the aspects. Furthermore, this chapter also aims at locating gaps in the literature regarding the topic to show the significance of this study in filling the research gap. This chapter is divided into 5 main parts and a few sub-parts as the following:

3.2 Assessing process during COVID19 and in the transition to post-pandemic

a) During Pandemic:

Covid19, needed a different assessment process to meet learners' needs as teaching-learning will not be conducted face-to-face. So, the assessment method should be formative, have cognitive complexity, and requires active participation (Sutadji et al., 2021; Correspondent, 2020)).

Moreover, Islam (2019) says that teachers are facing dilemmas regarding applying alternative assessments in the curriculum. Abdullah (2021) stated that he has knowledge but he was bounded by the system of authority that he cannot practice. Again, this article talks

about what alternative assessment is and also a comparison between traditional vs. alternative assessment. According to him, the traditional examination has been effective but now to assess students' ability as well as knowledge alternative assessment is best.

Proficiency in the English language happens gradually and for that implementation of an effective assessment is a must (Islam et al., 2021). When the pandemic started, the government decided to conduct remote learning and for assessment, they decided to give assignments. It applies to all subjects. Teachers did not require to give the effort to come up with innovative tasks because the government has taken initiative to design and provided assignments themselves (Lipi, 2021). The government informed us to upload assignments on the government's website of education DSHE. They asked students to expect assignments from the short syllabus of NCTB. The Government gave teachers four categories for evaluation superb, very good, good, and progress needed. (Alamgir, 2020). To receive homework, teachers and students have also chosen messenger as an easy tool for submitting students' works (Shrestha et al., 2021)

In 2020, students are auto-promoted to the next level (Alam, 2020). So, in 2021 initially, classes 6 to 9 were given assignments to identify learning shortcomings. However, it was neither for grading nor for promotion. So, they have given assignments to keep students engaged during pandemics. Moreover, according to The Daily Star, the government strictly prohibited students from plagiarism and instructed teachers to punish students by resubmitting their assignments if any situation occurs. Parents are asked to bring assignments to the school after done. Students were instructed to submit handwritten assignments (Alamgir, 2020)

b) Transition to Post-Covid19:

At the time of re-opening education institutions, all teachers are encouraged to assess learning gaps to get an idea of students' level of knowledge (Islam, 2021). Again, for re-

opening and adapting to new situations after two years of isolation, the government took annual examinations on a short syllabus from classes 5 to 9. Also, the JSC exam was held on a short syllabus to start the public examination of class 8 again after the pandemic (The Daily Star, 2021).

As auto pass was greatly criticized, therefore the government decided to re-open schools to take exams. Annual school exams of 2021 and JSC of class 8 was taken on limited subjects during the pandemic by following safety measure. Next, based on those assessment results, the government instructed school authorities to promote students to the next class (Abdullah, 2021). The government is thinking of including assignment-based assessments after re-opening as there might need for a closer again if the situation gets worse (Jasim, 2021).

3.3 Impact of assessing method during COVID19 and transition to post-pandemic

3.3.1 Positive impact

Research by Hashemi (2021) says that flexibility in assessment left a positive impact on learners by putting less pressure and stress during this hard time.

According to Mahapatra (2021), technology like zoom, WhatsApp, and Facebook helped teachers to interact with students more easily when they need. He also used messenger to exchange practical material and assessment scripts to help students with their studies during covid19. Moreover, from the teachers' point of view, remote learning saves time, space and audio-record help the learner to study in their free time (Hossain, 2021). University teachers have learned how to do active teaching and online assessing (Habib, 2021).

There are some advantages of online assessment, such as, it is cost-effective, flexible, efficient with online assessment tools, can monitor students' progress in real-time, easy to

correct mistakes, and can restore data in server and time savior (Alsalhi et al., 2022). In addition, as school teachers and students had prior knowledge about the assessing process of assignments, therefore, it was easy for them to implement and conduct it (Podder & Mizan, 2020). Despite having poor skills in technology, teachers have got the opportunity to take help from peers, fellow teachers, or other foreign teachers through YouTube or online media just by being at home (Bangladesh Case Study, 2021).

Moreover, developing the grading rubrics ahead of time helped teachers to evaluate students' assignments in a proper way (Rahman et al., 2022). Alternative assessment is a great way to reach students during this crisis period. According to Ali & Dmour, e-assessments even reduced tutoring effort and time to a great extent (2021). They added that from their survey students found online assessments easier to take than physical exams. Further, more questions than physical exams made students study deeply for their exams.

Finally, this remote education taught lessons to students and teachers that, screening all day before an exam is tiring and harm full. Students learned that they can learn better when they are energetic and healthy. Also, now they know the value of the educational institution (Hughes, 2020).

3.3.2 Negative impact

Remote education has been very challenging for all teachers as they are under-resourced and the availability, accessibility as well as uses of technology was not in the practice of Bangladesh's education system (Khan et al., 2012). Due to English being a significant language, Harrison (2020) feels the necessity of technical knowledge for teachers, to polish their online knowledge and provide successful teaching and assessing during this pandemic. Teachers and students have faced challenges like unstable internet connection, students' attendance, keeping students motivated, lack of technological knowledge, plagiarism checking,

and many more (Shrestha et al., 2021). She added that, even if urban areas can manage, rural teachers and students are facing the worst.

There are some other disadvantages as well, such as assessing practical skills is difficult in e-assessment, difficulty in estimating the length of broad answers, no way to get partial marks by explaining one's write-up and it does not allow teachers to observe students' line of thinking (Alsalhi et al., 2022).

According to Podder & Mizan, teachers do not have proper training on online assessment, therefore, many teachers consider alternative assessment as a burden (2020). They added that traditional teachers did not welcome alternative assessments. Furthermore, some of the students complain that they could not understand BTVs classes because the mode of language was Bangla and they might speak in another language like Chittagonian language. (*A Rapid Assessment Impact of COVID-19 on Education in Bangladesh*, 2020). Therefore, understanding what they need to do for assignments was a bit hard for them.

Among the four skills reading and writing were prominent and no speaking or listening classes were taken during online classes let alone taking exams on those skills. Even if speaking happened, Hossain (2021) says it is only for answering questions-answers. To supervise students, teachers go under pressure to ensure learning (Grubic et al., 2020). According to teachers, the integration of tasks was not smooth rather classroom activities felt like small breaks. He added that occasionally students felt enthusiastic and rubrics along with checklists are used to track learners' progress which was not sufficient (Mahapatra, 2021).

Access to educational resources is a big challenge for students; especially in economically limited households (Rabi, 2020). Bushra Zaman (2021) said while assessing, Bangladeshi teachers felt difficult to understand if learners have written what they understood and whether they can express their ideas clearly while writing assignments. Moreover, due to

a lack of immediate feedback after the class lecture, teachers were unable to assess students' understanding of the topic (Mukhtar et al., 2020). it is hard to identify whether students are killing their time during group work or not (Afrin, 2020). Assessments which fall during the time of the transition to post-COVID19 promotes memorization due to the exam pattern and way of delivering lecture (Islam et al., 2021).

According to Alam (2020), promoting students to the next class without grades and exams, made them anxious. He added that, as this is an era of the internet, losing creativity and finding weakness is a concern due to copy ad pasting in assignments. Again, due to the easy access to online resources, students tried to access those during online assessments and cheated (Mukhtar et al., 2020; Ali & Dmour, 2021). To some extent, e-assessment is unfair for students as it's hard to measure who cheated and who gave actual effort (Ali & Dmour, 2021). Gonzalez (2020) further mentioned that continuous studying in a non-rewarded scenario, made students demotivated to learn. As some assessments did not contribute to students' promotion, therefore, they lack attention in their studies (Alam, 2020). He further added that these assessment processes distracted teachers and students from quality education.

In addition, the language is a barrier because the platforms teachers-students use for remote assessing and teaching are in the English language. Therefore, navigation and understanding of those applications is an issue for parents and students who do not understand English (Wal, 2020). Due to a lack of stable internet and necessary devices, almost 57.90 percent of children in Bangladesh could not attend online education, let alone exams. Also, the education gap and remote education caused learners to drop out; female learners are the most affected ones (Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, Ministry of Education, 2020).

Mamun (2021) also mentions that Bangladeshi students are suffering from a financial crisis; as a result, not being able to buy and join through devices during class and online exams. He added that not only technophobia but they are also having mental disorders and health issues due to anxiety, stress, depression, lack of exercise, lack of sleep and sight problems for more browsing time.

During re-opening, if the government does not take proper initiative to attract students-parents towards education, then it will be an engraving issue that might take further years to restore minority's minds towards literacy (Tithi, 2020). This is a failed experiment for Bangladesh as students do not know how to do it and what to expect from teachers (Iqbal, 2021).

3.4 Government's action in fulfilling Gap and loss of education

3.4.1 Action during Pandemic:

Despite knowing the unfavorable condition of online teaching and assessing in Bangladesh, to some extent, this teaching and assessing mode can prove to be a help to prevent education loss (Uddin, 2020). With the collaboration of Bangladesh and UNICEF, Bangladesh is providing pragmatic various online as well as remote learning programs through television, mobile phones, radio, smartphones, internet platforms, etc. to reduce and prevent more loss in Education (Hossain, 2021). Also, the government is doing it to make English language teachers adapt to teaching English in this new situation.

To fulfil the education gap and understand subject contents, many students take tuition from private teachers during this period. In addition, parents who are financially well enough are eager to provide a private tutor to reduce and fill the gap caused by inadequate online education (Lipi, 2021). Moreover, to fulfil the education gap for disabled people, the Bangladeshi government has taken initiative to record textbooks besides Braille books and

multimedia talking devices to help disabled students during remote education (COVID 19, Technology-Based Education and Disability: The Case of Bangladesh Emerging Practices in Inclusive Digital Learning for Students with Disabilities, 2021).

3.4.2   Action in the transition to Post Pandemic:

The Bangladeshi government has addressed a three-stage plan to focus on readiness and support for recovering and reopening educational institutions in the post-pandemic emergency. They have joined forces with UNESCO and UNICEF for post-pandemic education. According to them, first of all, in short term (after 6 months)- they would build an education system that supports the safe re-opening of schools, and then in the medium term (immediate after 12 months), will ensure institution-based learning for everyone by implementing phase-wise re-opening and finally, they will develop a sustainable education system to avoid a similar outbreak in the future (Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, Ministry of Education, 2020).

Also, the government has taken an initiative toward a blended learning framework that combines digital learning and outdoor learning for students to ensure learning, fill the gap and make the transition smooth for students (Idrak, 2021). He added that, by ensuring teachers' training, the government is trying to focus on teaching initially the core subjects like Bangla, English, and Math to cope with classroom situations gradually.

3.5 Washback effect

According to Fitriyah   & Jannah (2021), the positive effects of the online assessment were increased flexibility of assessment (students can take the test anywhere and it is not proctored, allowing open access to their text and notes), increased awareness of creating online language assessments, and increased proficiency. Also, the negative effects were the complexity of administering assessments, reduced levels of contact and engagement between

teachers and students and irritation with technology and anxiety during language tests. Syafrizal & Pahamzah (2020) stated that teachers needed to teach students about the process of exams as well as what and how they should write, though they wanted to focus more on a better understanding of students' lessons. They added that despite all these, students were more relaxed to take the online assessment, eventually leading to a better learning outcome. Moreover, due to online assessment, they were able to prepare more effectively. However, even if a test is valid and trustworthy, it will be difficult to affect students' learning and help them grow their competence in useful and meaningful ways if the process and preparation are not properly addressed, which is the situation with English tests in schools during the pandemic.

3.6 Research gap

From the above discussion, it is observed that these are all general information that applies from school to university. There is no detailed and in-depth research information about the adaptation of the assessment process of four language skills during the pandemic and transition to post-pandemic in the Bangladeshi context.

Again, researches on the impact of learners' assessment processes are also not specifically mentioned in most of the literature. Moreover, there is hardly any research on teaching-learning and assessment regarding the gradual transition to post-pandemic and reopening schools. If the reader looks at the references in the literature, most of them are news articles about Bangladesh. Other papers that I have cited on schools are researched at the secondary and tertiary levels. Thus, this research is to fill those gaps and add further new information on this topic in the context of Bangladesh.

Chapter 4

Results and discussion

4.1 Introduction

After analyzing the entire interview, I could find three core themes; i) Adaptation of Assessment Process ii) Different types of Assessments iii) Impact of the assessment. Moreover, under each theme, there are some categories. All these have been discussed below:

4.2 Adaptation of Assessment process

For adapting a specific assessment method during the pandemic, teachers of each school did not have to go through brain-storming stages. The reason was the government's intervention. At that crucial stage, the government took everything on hand, and by considering the situation they assigned 'Assignments' as an assessment method for students. Mrs. Ruhi said, "It was easy to follow the government's instruction because along with the assessment method, they have provided us with a rubric to evaluate students' assignments. We practically did not have to do anything."

Another teacher Mrs Orpita mentioned that "All the questions of the assignments were already created by the government. So, we just provided students all the questions every week and told them to follow the rubrics because marks distribution, type of category and writing process for it was already mentioned besides the assignment question". Again, she added that, "we did not need to give marks in numerical value, rather government mentioned 4 categories like excellent, very good, good and needs improvement. This also made assignment evaluation easy for us."

As for the students, they are already accustomed to assignments before the pandemic. Therefore, they already had the idea of how to write assignments. Maliha, a student of class 6 stated, "We are already experienced in writing assignments because we needed to write in each level of class but during that time teachers only gave us questions or topics for the assignment. However, this time the criteria of getting good marks and a little bit of hint were given along with the question. So, we know what to write and how to write already." Some of them mention that they had a home tutor who also helped them when they faced difficulty or took help from the internet as well as peers.

However, after almost 2 years of isolation and staying in lockdown, it was not easy for students to sit for the offline exam. During an interview, Sara mentioned that "No class, no nothing and suddenly we had to sit for the final exam after so long. I was kind of afraid to sit for the exam in school." Ruqaia added that "I was also anxious and thinking about what will happen in the exam hall. I will forget everything before the exam starts and so on." Moreover, along with Moumita, some other students agreed on one thing though the exam was held on a short syllabus and the allocated marks for the English exam were only 50, however, students felt nervous to give offline examinations after the re-opening of their schools. Not only students felt pressure but also teachers had gone through extreme pressure conducting and developing final questions in a short syllabus. Mrs. Ruhi stated that "I had to consider the knowledge level of every student, what they had taught and how much they had learned during the lockdown. After considering all this I had to select tasks and topics which students could easily perform"

Therefore, from the above findings, it can be said that the process of adaptation was undisrupted and smooth to execute during the crisis, yet the scenario during the transition period was not comfortable at all. Both teachers and students were comfortable with the new way of assessing in the pandemic. Teachers did not face any difficulty to develop and implement assignments during the lockdown as the government did that for them. Also, despite

staying at home and getting instruction through online platforms, students completed their assignments comfortably with the help of proper guidance.

However, the case is different in terms of post-pandemic. Students faced problems adapting to the in-person assessment process due to the study gap and not attending physical exams for almost two years. During this course of time, they developed a fear of physical exams as they were more comfortable with writing assignments at home. As for teachers, they faced difficulty during the transition period because It's been two years since they had conducted offline exams for students and made question papers because during the pandemic government did that for them. Hence, an adaptation of the assessment process after the pandemic was less comfortable than during the pandemic for both teachers and students.

4.3 Different types of Assessments

a) Assessments during Covid19

To assess students learning during the Covid19 pandemic, schools and the government have assigned alternative assessments for students. The reason behind this initiative is the lockdown and the closer of the educational institution. From the participants' statements I have found that the government assigns assignments for each level which is the same for every school in Bangladesh. However, other assessment processes that schools have taken on their initiative vary from school to school.

ii)   Assignment

To keep students productive and engage with education, the government assigned assignments across the country. Each subject had its assignments. Therefore, English is not an exception to having assignments.

According to the teachers, Mrs Ruhi and Orpita these assignments are designed and implemented solely by the government. Schools are only instructed to follow the government's instructions. The topics of the assignments are from each textbook. Moreover, from the student's point of view, the government tried to prepare assignments creatively where students have to also think creatively before they answer questions of the assignment. However, all these assignments were small assignments that require one to three pages to complete depending on students' handwriting. Teachers said that government comes up with assignments while thinking about students' ability and the availability of teaching on that lesson or unit of the English textbooks.

To evaluate, the government published a grading system which was applicable for every course. Therefore, all assignments were prepared in such a way that while assessing teachers can easily evaluate through those categories. For instance, the government had set four categories for evaluation such as excellent, very good, good, and progress needed. Here, each category was defined every preciously to make it easy for the teacher to evaluate students writing. Thus, according to both the teachers, they did not have trouble assessing students' assignments.

iii) The other types of assessments

Other than assignments, students stated that schools have taken more initiative to assess them. However, it varies from school to school and respective English teachers. During COVID19 students were introduced and got comfortable with the technology, therefore, some schools such as Moumita's school have taken online quiz exams where they have given MCQ-type questions to students so that they did not need to write down anything and could select the correct option by looking through the screen.

One of the students, Sadman said that during the class teachers ask them questions to see whether they had understood what had been taught to them. Another participant said that after the class some teachers had a 10-minute question-answer session to verify that students understood everything through online education. Mrs Orpita, the teacher of class 7stated that they sometimes did this to ensure that students had fewer complications in understanding English grammar or ETF (English For Today) lessons. Sometimes teachers gave homework and students need to show those by holding it in front of the screen. According to students, teachers would then assess those and occasionally gave feedback.

c) Assessment during the transition to post-pandemic (Reopening)

Now, in the time post-pandemic, as the schools have started to reopen gradually, therefore classes have started to work more or less like the usual time. Hence, with proper health and safety measures, schools are now taking offline exams. During the transition to a post-pandemic, schools took the offline exam on a selective syllabus with the government's guidance. One participant said that their school is taking in-person short exams like quizzes. However, this scenario is not the same for every school. Even so, those schools' exam question consists of MCQ followed by filling in the gaps and some grammar part. Some schools took 50 marks exam and some took 25. After analyzing questions of a particular school, I have found that the question is a mixture of English 1st and 2nd papers. 30 marks were allocated for English 1st and 20 marks for English 2nd paper questions.

This assessment was done in on the English exam and for evaluation; it has a different grading system than during the Pandemic. They considered 50 marks as 100 and had given grades using usual grading policies before the pandemic.

From the above results, it can be said that the assignment method of assessing was a good initiative from the government because during COVID19 students were in lockdown,

schools were closed, and the online teaching method was not sufficient for students to sit for the exam, so by considering all these factors assignment was a good initiative from the government. In addition to these, which method needs less instruction to give, might have also been considered as well by the government because they assigned assignments which is a familiar method for students that requires providing fewer instructions. This also reduced the stress on the teachers as it had a specific rubric and they did not need to develop anything during the crisis moment. As for the other assessment methods conducted by teachers, those helped students to stay focused during online classes even if it is for a short time.

Similarly, the assessment method during the transition to post-pandemic was also beneficial for students because it was conducted in a short syllabus. It helped students to adjust to the environment of the exam hall and exam questions after a long period. Moreover, it helped teachers as well, because they needed to prepare English question papers which carried only fifty percent marks than usual. Therefore, this method of reducing allocated marks allowed the teachers to adjust themselves again with developing question papers.

4.4 Impact of the assessment

i) Positive impact of the assessment process and methods

The assessment process during COVID19 left some positive impacts on students which is quite noticeable and effective for them. These are subcategorized in the following points:

a) Helped students to stay productive:

We know that it's hard to make students stay engaged with studies if there is no process for assessing their learning.

During COVID-19 students were facing the worst consequences. For the first time, they were having online classes at home. They might feel monotonous; however, as they knew that

they had to complete their assignments, therefore, they were to some extent attentive to classes and productive. They tried to complete assignments as instructed during the lockdown. All the students agreed with the above discussion. One of my participants, Maliha said, "These assignments helped us to stay productive even for a little period".

b) Enhance the learning process

According to Sadia, "Sitting at home without studying is hard as we were not used to with it. During this lockdown, every type of assessment is reinforcing learning. Those are beneficial for us". Other student participants also mentioned a similar kind of point of view. Even in lockdown students were eager to learn properly due to the assessments, otherwise, they might not try to learn anything from the online classes because it is hard to concentrate without any external force. Here, assignments were working as an external factor that helped them to learn further. Sara said, "because of the assessment we tried to learn better by following classes. This facilitates learning and has helped us to continue with the studies further".

c) Motivated students:

The closure of educational institutions had demotivated students. However, online classes, assessing students with assignments, and other mini-assessments gave them hope for learning even in lockdown. According to Shimu, "Half a loaf is better than none; at least we are connected to our education and engaged with writing homework as well as assignments." Ruqaia also agreed with her by saying "yeah, it motivated us." Moreover, other participants agreed that this initiative gave them the strength to continue studying even if the situation was not comfortable.

d) Made students overcome anxiousness:

This sudden pandemic brought fear regarding life and career. Students lived with both of them during the pandemic; especially at the beginning of it. Tanisha said that "because of these online assessments and government assignments, we are at ease even for a little. We were much tensed regarding our education and feared the possibility of dropout. However, online education and assessment are relieved for us and also for our parents." All the participants have mentioned similar concerns and stated that Assignments help them to forget the rage of the pandemic by making them engaged with assessments of online classes.

e) Competitive environment made parents take initiative to reduce further study gap:

Before COVID-19, parents and students were always concerned and competitive regarding their children's education. However, during the pandemic, they were more concerned about the future because of students' educational gap. Online education allowed everyone to be competitive while sitting at home. Ruquia mentioned having a private tutor. She added that "As there were assignments and online classes, therefore, my parents want me to do well in those assignments. Also, during mini-class assessments they want me to do well in that and learn well, so for that reason they give me a home tutor to reduce study loss. This also made me do well than everybody else." Some students gain a competitive advantage.

f) Moved students to technologically based education

Since education was solely based on online as well as assessments, students learned to use technology even if it was not easy for them. All of my participants (students) said that to search materials on YouTube or Google they need to struggle at first but later on master up on that. Moumita added, "It was a bit tough to learn a new platform to give online MCQ exams, however, after one exam it was easy for me to use a Google form to give next exams."

According to students and teachers now they can take and give exams using a line platform. Ruqaia mentioned that "I don't have fear of using new apps anymore."

g) Provided comfort, saved time and energy

To some extent, the online assessment process helped students to give exams comfortably from their homes. It also saved their time, money, and energy. Sara mentioned that "online assessments and assignments saved my time and energy from going to school. I could invest all of my time and energy in each assignment. Also, as I am giving exams from my own home, it gives me a great advantage to finish my assessments while sitting in my comfortable place." Other students also agreed on the part of writing assignments and giving online exams by being comfortable and stress-free at home.

Moreover, gradually reopening and taking small assessments in schools also have a positive effect on students. For instance,

a) Making students comfortable with the school's usual examination process:

After being at home for 18 months and continuing education from home has developed anxiety and doubt about their ability to give offline exams. Therefore, small offline exams have helped students to be comfortable again with the school's assessment process. Sara said that "I doubted my ability and was a little nervous before giving offline exams. However, as schools started to take exams on the small syllabus, therefore, it helped me to get comfortable with in-person exams gradually after almost 2 years."

ii) Negative impact of the Assessment Process

Though the whole process of assessment might seem like a blessing to everyone because of the continuation of learning, however, it is not the actual case. There are negative impacts as well and those were the barriers to the way students learn. For instance,

31

a) No implementation of four language skills

Although before the pandemic schools only focused on reading and writing skills, during that time, they already had a proper well-established assessment process regarding writing skills. Nevertheless, during the pandemic, practicing reading and writing skills were even worse than before. There was no initiative to assess students reading skills. No tasks were included in any assignments. According to Sara, "When schools were open, at least we got some reading comprehension tasks to determine our reading ability but during online, there was nothing like that though". As for writing skills, the implementation process was not worthy of learning. Creativity was missing in most of the cases. Hence, the purpose of the writing skill did not get fulfilled at all.

b) Tendency of copying

One of the participants called Sadman mentioned that all the assignments required writing skills but the quality of each assignment was very poor in terms of authenticity. As the education system has moved to the online platform, everything is easy to access, even the answers to the assignments. Everything was available on the internet. Sara said that "In the beginning, I tried to write assignments using my creativity, but after a while when I saw that my other friends are not giving enough effort and copying assignments from the internet, so I also started to copy them from the internet. It was easy to do that". Other students agreed with this statement as well.

Also, while analyzing students writing samples, I found that all are the same. It felt like most of them have copied from the same YouTube channel or online platform. The teachers said that "as there was no system of punishment during this crisis period, so the rate of plagiarism was high. Most of them were just copied from the internet and submitted to me."

c) Unable to fulfil study gap

The assessments are not designed to be effective in terms of filling the study gap, caused by the pandemic. Mrs Orpita said that "all the assignments were only to keep students engaged with education. Other than that, the tasks of the assignments did not hold any significant value." All the other participants also agreed to that. Sadman said that "I did not learn anything from the assignments because I find it a bit wired and could not relate to the tasks." Other students also shared the same viewpoint on this topic that assignments did not help students fill any study gap.

d) Anxiety regarding online assessments

Online assessments also increased anxiety among students. It happened due to the quizzes. Moumita and Tania mentioned that their school gave a limited time during quizzes and due to unstable internet connection; it's hard for them, to select the answers or complete the exam. Therefore, there was a continuous fear of the exam's time is running out. This only happened among the students of certain schools who had taken online quizzes.

e) Absence of feedback

On usual days, teachers provide feedback on students' assignments. However, during the pandemic teachers did not give any feedback on assignments. Even if students asked their teachers for feedback yet they did not provide any. For instance, Moumita said that "We did not know where we did mistakes and where to improve." According to Sabreena "Even if we ask them, they only tell us whether we got good, excellent or very good remarks and tend to avoid it."

The teacher's reply to this statement is that "Most of the assignments are plagiarized, so we did not feel encouraged or the necessity of giving feedback." Therefore, for the sake of the institute, they are telling only the truth.

f) Improper implication of evaluation guideline

Another negative impact was giving the same score to all without proper reasons. According to participants, surprisingly they found that most of the students got 'very good' or 'excellent' even after copying from the internet or submitting similar copies. Ruqaia added that "One day I went to the teacher's room to ask about the result of my assignment, however, the teacher said that she still hadn't finished checking yet. When I was returning, she said she would give 'excellent' to all the students and told me to tell everyone about this."

From this, it can be said that teachers did not follow the rubrics properly or give marks by judging students' abilities. Mrs., Orpita said, "Their answers are all the same, so it does not matter even if I properly evaluate them or not."

The assessment process during the transition to post-pandemic also has negative impacts on learners, for instance,

a) Anxiety to sit for the exam

For a long period of staying at home and continuing education from their comfort zone, students accepted it as a new normal. Therefore, after the re-opening, sitting for an exam immediately made them anxious. According to all the students' statements, it felt different to sit for the offline exam after so long. They have gone through hesitation, nervousness, and anxiety to appear in the exam hall. They took time for getting used to the offline assessment process as well as performing without fear again.

Therefore, from the above results, it can be said that the negative impacts of the assessment process are more prominent than the positive impacts though visually the positive impacts are more. However, the effect of negative impacts will last for a long time even after the pandemic where the positive impacts only lasted during COVID19. Some negative impacts are hard to overcome and are a long process to do so. For instance, the most crucial negative

impact is the study gap. The gap in students' knowledge caused due to the improper implementation of the assessment process, ineffective teaching methods and absence of feedback have hampered the flow of education. Teachers and the authority must consider the level of students' knowledge before allocating topics alike before the pandemic. As the situation of students is not the same as before the pandemic, so the teachers cannot provide the same English syllabus to the students that they had given before. If they do so, then students will fall under another crisis of incomprehension. Students will not be able to understand the advanced topics of English grammar due to the lack of proper prior knowledge on that topic. Thus, this situation needs redesigning of the syllabus to reduce the study gap gradually.

In addition to that, during the online assessment, students have developed the habit of plagiarizing. This negative impact requires the implementation of strict rules and punishment policy to mitigate the habit of copying. Otherwise, it will be hard to reduce this tendency of copying among students. Furthermore, another negative impact is having anxiety during exams. Though it might seem that it will occur only during exams, however, the feeling of anxiety might take a long time to lessen its effect as it is a psychological condition. As they have developed anxiety therefore it might emerge in other situations. Lastly, during the pandemic, no implementation of four language skills affected students negatively because there were no proper implementations of any skills of English. Therefore, students now even lack writing skills. The reason behind mentioning only the writing skill is that schools only focus on reading and writing skills. During the online assessment, students' ability to write creatively got reduced. As for teachers, their efficiency in giving feedback and checking scripts is also reduced which might take time to overcome. Nevertheless, it's not as severe as the other negative impacts of the assessment during the pandemic.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

This study aimed to explore learners' assessment methods and related impacts on students and teachers during COVID19 as well as in the post-pandemic. In addition, this paper also gives an overview of the teaching and learning process through a literature review to give readers enough exposure to understand the context in which the assessment happened during the above-mentioned time frame. By analyzing the qualitative data, this study briefly explains the adaptation process of assessments by the teachers and students; some adapted assessment methods by the government as well as teachers for continuing education during the crisis. Moreover, this study explores some challenges related to the assessment process during this exceptional time of the pandemic.

The results and discussion section of this thesis consist of three themes. One is the adaptation of the assessment process, the second is different types of assessments and the third theme is the impact of the assessment process. From these sections, readers get to know that teachers and students have adapted the assessment method smoothly which was developed by the government. However, students faced difficulty while performing tasks like class work or in-class question-answer sessions due to technical issues. One can also notice the absence of incorporating four language skills even in remote assessment. Although the positive impact of assessment is more than the negative, nevertheless, the negative impact will stay for a long time that might need a proper strategy to overcome, especially the study gap. It will require the effective measure to reduce the gap in learners' grammatical knowledge. Other negative impacts can be reduced by implementing proper rules and regulations.

The results and discussion section will help schools and policymakers to notice the negative impacts, lacks, and gaps of learners. These will help them to find effective measures to implement those efficiently after post-pandemic. Post-pandemic is a long process to recover our education system. Thus, this section might help them to think creatively for a long time to mitigate the gap which has been created during the pandemic. Additionally, this research work will encourage other researchers to go for further similar topics with more participants and time to find new viewpoints on this problem.

A few recommendations can be made after this study. For instance,

a) The authority and the policymakers should consider incorporating speaking and listening assessments gradually in the education system. Even if the allocated marks are minimum. It will help learners to get used to these two skills as well

b) In addition, before incorporating, the authority should give proper training to the school teachers so that they can ensure the proper learning regarding these two skills. Teachers should learn a student-friendly way to teach and assess them.

c) Again, regarding the learning gap which has been created during the pandemic, teachers should step by step emphasize those by allocating a small portion of previous topics in their teaching and assessing altogether with the current ones. This will help students to restudy those topics correctly and recover from their losses without further pressure.

d) Finally, schools and government should develop some strategies to build a solid assessment process to tackle any sudden circumstances like COVID19 in the future to prevent a gap in learners' knowledge.

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Appendix A

Interview Questions

Student

1. How are you coping with the new assessing style?

2. Did you face problems while using technology?

3. How did you get assessed in 2020, 2021, and 2022?

4. What type of assignments did you have?

5. Was it help full? Did you learn anything?

6. Did you use your creativity in assignments?

7. Are you satisfied with the grading system? Why or why not?

8. Did you get a private tutor in 2020, 2021, and 2022? Why or why not?

9. What types of challenges did you face while attending English exams remotely? Are you facing challenges now?

10. Do you get feedback from teachers?

11. Did you learn 4 skills of language?

12. Do you think these assessment methods were able to reduce the gap in English?

13. What motivates you?

14. What are the good and bad sides of assessing English online?

15. Have you learned any lessons from this pandemic?

16. What challenges did students face while giving the final exam in 2021?

17. Were those assessments helped you throughout your final exam in 2021?

Teacher

1. Which class and medium do you teach?

2. Which skills do you focus more on (Speaking, listening, reading, and writing)? What happens to other skills? Why it is hard to implement some skills online as well as offline?

3. How did you assess them in 2020 and 2021?

4. Do you think assessments were helpful for students? Did they use their creativity or plagiarized?

5. Were English assignments come from the government? Apart from assignments, did you come up with any other alternative way to assess students' learning?

6. Did you take exams to promote students?

7. What challenges did teachers face while preparing the annual English question paper in 2021?

8. Did you get training for conducting online classes? Did you face problems while using technology?

9. Do you think a learning gap has been created as schools were closed in 2020? What type of impact did it have on students in terms of English? How are you trying to reduce that gap through assessment? (Especially the Grammar part)

10. Do you think students learned better?

11. What is your point of view on students taking private tutoring during this pandemic?

12. What measures govt. took for students in terms of assessment?

13. What challenges are you facing now?

14. What was the impact of assessing English during Covid19? (positive and negative impacts)

15. What strategies are you planning to assess students in the transition to post-COVID19? (Strategies for English 1st and 2nd paper)