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## English Language Teaching through Virtual Classroom during COVID-19 Lockdown in Bangladesh: Challenges and Propositions

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### Abstract

Bangladesh, like many other countries of the world, has been strongly hit by COVID-19 pandemic and her education sector, among other essential fields of life, is under strict lockdown. The onsite mode of institutional education is absolutely stopped although of late educational institutes mostly non-governmental ones, with the permission as well as guidelines of the Ministry of Education and/or University Grand Commission (UGC), have adopted and are implementing online classes as an alternative way of imparting education. Accordingly, English language teaching and learning is happening in full swing via online classes. However, many have raised questions as to the rationale of executing virtual education and assessment, especially how to teach and assess the four skills, i.e. Listening, Reading, Writing and Speaking, of English language through online sessions when majority of the teachers and students are fundamentally bereft of the essential technological resources and internet coverage. On these notes, the current study has sought to learn the experience and perceptions of 50 teachers and 50 students who are currently teaching and learning English through online classes at various institutes across the country. The researcher has interviewed the sample population with two disparate open-ended questionnaires through e-mail and social networking sites, like Messenger and Facebook to learn teachers' and learners' experiences and suggestions on the present online education nationwide and how much feasible it is if COVID-19-pandemic lockdown persists longer only to make education system run through a "new normal" manner. The study offers crucial findings relating to a number of technology and internet-related unsolved issues in the current continuation of English language education via online in Bangladesh. Simultaneously, it suggests ineludible modifications to be accomplished on teachers, learners, educational institutions, technological resources and internet communications if ELT through online is to be made fruitful.

**Keywords:** COVID-19, Lockdown, English Language Teaching, Virtual Classroom, Challenges, Propositions

### Introduction

World Health Organization (WHO) defines COVID-19 as an acute respiratory disease caused by Coronavirus Sars-Cov-2 and has declared it a pandemic to which many countries worldwide have responded seriously by imposing partial or

absolute lockdown which has resulted in the shutdown of educational institutions including schools, colleges and universities (Naciri, Baba, Achbani & Kharbach, 2020). Educational institutions are facing colossal challenges to continue imparting education among the students so as not to let COVID-19 situation put an indefinite stop to the institutional learning and growing of the generation, which is why the academicians and educational researchers feel the pressing necessity for educational institutions to reinforce the practices in the curriculum and the use of innovative teaching techniques and approaches that will prove effective during this impasse (Toquero, 2020) cited in (Naciri, Baba, Achbani & Kharbach, 2020).

The COVID-19 has compelled almost the entire world to implement shutdown of schools and other academic institutes, as a result of which, worldwide, more than 1.2 billion students are at home being out of the classroom (Li & Lalani, 2020). In consequence, education has worn a drastic change featuring vivid emergence and activation of e-learning, where teaching and learning are being ensured on digitalized platforms from any distance (Li & Lalani, 2020). In the mounting concerns a propos the escalation of COVID-19 and the unavoidability of Corona Virus, academic institutions across the world have closed down in relation to onsite classes globally. Accordingly, the virus pandemic has divulged the budding exposedness of the education systems worldwide, which makes it only obvious that the world requires malleable but sturdy education systems since humans are susceptible to encounter erratic circumstances anytime (Ali, 2020). The findings of Ali's (2020) study unearth that universities around the world are bending increasingly towards online learning or E-Learning, for which educational institutes are experiencing manpower preparedness, learner confidence and convenience, and stimuli, in addition to resource availability, to be playing crucial roles in ICT propelled learning. The study was almost the same as by several researchers who thought that online learning is one of the solutions for this pandemic because online learning helps teacher and students in learning English (Anggita, et al. 2020; Azwandi, et al. 2019; Syahrial & Syafryadin, 2020; Syafryadin, et al. 2020; Septinawati, et al. 2020).

To the learners of Bangladesh, English as the global *lingua franca* is of paramount importance, which makes it understandable why Bangladesh possesses one of the largest English learning populations in the world (Rahman & Pandian, 2018). Published in 2016, a World Bank report acknowledges Bangladesh as a lower

middle-income country, taking in consideration the nation's stable progress in the last decade (Rahman & Pandian, 2018), for which English language has played and been playing an irrefutable role by producing efficient manpower that is competent worldwide (Hamid, 2010) cited in (Rahman et al, 2019). In consequence, the consistent advancement of teaching and learning English has turned to be a matter of optimum significance to the nation (Rahman et al, 2019). In the recent decades, due to the fact that Bangladesh has attained substantial development and possession of ICT, teaching and learning English, among many other academic phenomena, have been more digitalized (Hossain, 2018). Smartphones powered by Android and other latest sophistications along with Applications (apps) are quite available among learners of Bangladesh to learn English language (Hossain, 2018).

On such considerations of e-learning of English language teaching and learning, Harrison (2020) feels it essential for the EFL/ESL teachers to sharpen and augment their online knowledge so as to keep up successful teaching during Covid-19 crisis. Researches reveal that online learning has been proved to disseminate education taking less time and enhance preservation of information, which altogether endorses the idea that educating through online might be going to live as a reality due to the changes COVID-19 has engulfed the world with (Li & Lalani, 2020). Coping with the call of time, English language teachers from various institutes of Bangladesh including secondary, higher secondary and tertiary institutes are conducting online classes in the current pandemic days albeit with much hype and controversy. On this note, this study seeks to know what makes continuation of online teaching-learning a challenge and how it can be made feasible.

Shenoy, Mahendra & Vijay (2020) investigate the technology adoption, teaching-learning process, student engagement and faculty experience towards virtual classroom during COVID-19 lockdown in Bengaluru, India and the findings reveal that during the shutdown period, the faculty have realized the mechanism of technology adoption and students have been involved in various online modes of learning though there are lots of apprehensions, worries and awareness among learners and teachers regarding the virus pandemic. Researchers also convey that majority of the higher education in Bengaluru has comprehensively adopted the technology and students' wholehearted participation has proved to be better than

regular class engagement because of the availability of uninterrupted as well as speedy internet communication in the state (Shenoy, Mahendra & Vijay, 2020).

The study of Raheem & Khan (2020) explores that during the nationwide as well as worldwide lockdown resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic, e-learning can be a safe and effective, personalized and available tool to strengthen students' English language skills among many other prospective courses on numerous aspects of knowledge. As to the effectuation of virtual education during COVID-19 pandemic shutdown, Basilaia & Kvavadze (2020) conduct a case study in Georgia by implementing Google Meet among the target students to impart online education and the findings assure that the rapid shift to the virtual mode of education proved successful and the obtained experience seemed prospective. In a situation that does in no way allow the academicians to conduct onsite teaching activities and the students to attend online classrooms, the logical alternative is to shift from traditional to virtual mode of carrying on education (Basilaia & Kvavadze, 2020).

There exist multifarious challenges and obstacles in the way to introduce and integrate technologies for extending and strengthening education in the contexts weak in technological possession, where, as Shohel and Kirkwood (2012) points out, often a variety of interconnected phenomena demand simultaneous crucial solution, i.e. financial solvency, availability of technical support, socio-political serenity, attitudinal change, pedagogical adoption etc. Islam (2016) highlights that Bangladesh, like many other countries putting substantial importance on educational advancement, is regarding the boost of her education system as one of the fundamental strategies to put an end to poverty and materialize development that includes the enhancement of ICT skills of the citizens and the creations of a society enriched with information availability, and as such, the country is stimulating greater investment in the education system.

Allo's (2020) study unearths that majority of the learners perceive learning through online amidst Coronavirus crisis to be good and necessary, for they value the chance to continue education even in the pandemic; simultaneously, for online learning for all, they feel the need for a number of things, like the accessibility of

internet, economic ease, availability of educational technological resources and implementation of online academy.

According to Farah & Ahmed (2014), Internet or Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is developing rapidly and people want to enjoy its multidimensional blessings one of which is education through online that can be called by many names, like Virtual Learning, Remote Learning, Off-site Learning, Web-Based Learning (WBL), Web-Based Instruction (WBI), Web-Based Training (WBT), Mobile Learning (or m-Learning), Nomadic Learning Internet-Based Training (IBT), Distributed Learning (DL), Advanced Distributed Learning (ADL), Distance Learning, Online Learning (OL) etc.

Bangladesh has been being emphatically digitalized and many academicians are emphasizing the significance of teaching through technological integration into Bangladeshi education curriculums, especially the higher education curriculum (Mahmuda, 2016). Therefore, the traditional setting in higher education is being relocated to non-fenced virtual classrooms from the four-walled ones by virtue of the technology-based resources that are being increasingly applied to fruitful teaching and learning in the mode of reciprocating tools and devices including whiteboard, multimedia projector, mobile phones, TV channels, social networking websites, MOODLE, Podcast, web quest, website, ebooks, e-journals, e-encyclopedia, e-dictionary and some more virtual resources (Mahmuda, 2016).

Sarker, et al. (2019) find that e-learning has attained considerable acceptance among most of the students who routinely spend time internet and electronic devices regularly in learning through online arrangements, like lecture videos, course information, postings of the fellow students in the forum and comments and suggestions of the teachers. Nonetheless, the researchers, Sarker, Mahmud, Islam & Islam, (2019) mention that there are a number of constraints such as: insufficiently designed learning materials, weak internet connection and unavailability of equal online as well as technological scopes to all teachers and learners; and to solve these issues and ensure an unquestionable flow of e-learning, coordinated endeavors by all stakeholders, such as students, lecturers, administrators and policy makers are must in order that the design and implementation of online education conform to the need, desire and expectations of each and every individual in it.

To accelerate educational service and activities, academic institutions in Bangladesh are resorting to web-based tools in growing amount since many institutes have developed academic portals where teachers upload the virtual forms of their lectures and instructions, and students can join the portal to learn ubiquitously (Chowdhury, 2020). Since the users of internet technology in Bangladesh have comprehensively grown in number in the recent years and are increasing swiftly currently, the country is obtaining vivid progress of digitalization which is gradually being utilized in creating an ever-existent ambience of active learning (Chowdhury, 2020).

The Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics' Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2019 discovers that only 37.6% families across the nation enjoy access to the internet service by any device from home and only 5.6% families possess a computer or tablet whereas Telecom research finds that 30% mobile phone users of Bangladesh use smartphones (Alamgir, 2020). Maximum of the universities and colleges are also not empowered with required amount of hardware and internet service to provide teaching online (Ahmed, 2020).

While majority of the previous studies in relation to the educational arrangement of Bangladesh has revealed phenomena, like, but not limited to, the country's possession and status as to ICT advancement (Islam, 2016), the digitalization of academic activities (Mahmuda, 2016), the acceptability of e-learning among Bangladeshi tech-savvy learners (Sarker, 2019), the web-based academic portals resorted to by many of the educational institutes, the insufficiency of internet-supporting logistic resources in majority of the institutes (Ahmed, 2020), the use of smartphones and apps in teaching and learning English (Hossain, 2018), and the applicability of e-learning during widespread lockdown (Raheem & Khan, 2020), this study concentrates on the ongoing execution of virtual teaching and learning of English language skills during these COVID-19 days with absolute shutdown of onsite and in-class education in Bangladesh, and purposively explore the advantages and obstacles faced by both the language facilitators and the facilitated ones along with the pragmatic suggestions given by both the parties for the successful application of online ELT education in the country.

Bangladesh Government in collaboration with UNICEF is currently providing pragmatic online and distance learning programs using internet platforms, television, radio, mobile phones, smartphones etc. to maximum number of students around the country. Simultaneously, UNICEF is also providing required supports and trainings to the teachers involved in teaching in remote and internet-based classes (UNICEF Bangladesh, 2020). But majority of the students in Bangladesh, unlike those in the developed nations of the world, have no internet or online, which is why, education from government patronization is basically being provided through delivering classes on television sets since TV's can be found in almost every family of the country (UNICEF Bangladesh, 2020). Nevertheless, UNICEF Bangladesh (2020) thinks that distance education is very often challenging even for the keenest learners as both television and internet offer little opportunity for real life learning interactions.

Despite all sorts of arguments and counter arguments in relation to conducting online classes in the institutions including schools, colleges and universities in Bangladesh, many institutes, mostly the private ones, have started providing virtual lessons on various subjects comprising English language. As such, this study seeks to unearth how English Language Teaching during COVID-19 lockdown in Bangladesh is going on and if virtual classroom is implementable here with optimum benefits.

As the key objectives, the study aims to discern the necessity of online English language classes during COVID-19 lockdown in Bangladesh, to be acquainted with the experiences and perceptions of the teachers teaching English through online classes during COVID-19 lockdown in Bangladesh, to know how the students feel about attending online English classes during COVID-19 lockdown in Bangladesh, to identify the prospects and problems of teaching and learning English through online classes during COVID-19 lockdown in Bangladesh, and to obtain suggestions from both teachers and learners of English language to make online classroom a pragmatic reality in Bangladesh.

### **Research Methodology**

The methodology of the study is the mixed one having the combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods to obtain a better understanding on the research problem and complicated issues than any single method (Creswell &

Plano Clark, 2007) cited in (Molina-Azorin, 2016). Two different questionnaires with open-ended questions, one for the teachers and the other for the students, were used to collect quantitative data as well as qualitative information. In addition, the researcher has studied substantial number of related contents along with current and previous researches on the problem to come across sufficient amount of qualitative idea.

Open-ended questionnaire has been used to shun the partiality that might emerge from suggesting responses to the respondents and to explore the ideas the respondents provide with spontaneity (Reja, Manfreda, Hlebec & Vehovar, 2003). Moreover, according to Allen (2017), open-ended questions do not let the participants choose from a prearranged bunch of answer options; rather allow them to present replies in their own language. As the current study is an exploratory one, open-ended questions let the researcher attain a holistic and inclusive insight into the problem being studied (Allen, 2017).

The population sample of this study includes 50 English teachers and 50 students studying English as core course or as a subject of the syllabus, who are currently teaching and learning English respectively via virtual classrooms. The sample population has been chosen through simple random sampling method from various academic institutes of Bangladesh comprising schools, colleges and universities. Simple random sampling has been utilized considering the fact that it works in a simple manner in the first place, and is an unprejudiced approach to collect data and information from a comparatively large group (Horton, 2019).

For analyzing the data of the research, the researcher has used the exploratory method of data analysis that consists of the task of extracting important variables. The data collection procedure of this research has aimed to explore both the qualitative data, in terms of the technological devices and applications being used, problems being faced, advantages being enjoyed in virtual classrooms and suggestions as well as recommendations being given as to the fruitful execution of the continuation of ELT through online classes, and quantitative data, in terms of the number or percentage of the participants out of the total population sample, that provide certain type of views on each of the question variables. Accordingly, this research has utilized the exploratory data analysis method to demonstrate as well as

distinguish numerical and/or percentage-wise figures of the total population sample with regard to disparate kinds of open-ended responses in the manner of comparing and contrasting to offer a discernible distinction among the response variables and, as such, to present logical qualitative inferences in relation to the findings of the study.

### **Findings and Discussion**

For conducting and attending virtual classes amidst the current COVID-19 pandemic and, in consequence, the shutdown of academic institutions across the county, both the teachers and learners resort to some available as well as viable technological devices, like smartphones, laptops and desktops, and classes or meetings enabling software applications, like Zoom Cloud Meeting, Google Classroom and Facebook. Unlike onsite classrooms, the online classrooms make L2 teachers and learners instruct and learn the four skills of the lingua franca in different manners. Nevertheless, the virtual classroom experiences of both of the teachers and learners demonstrate that imparting ELT education, or education as a whole, via online system in Bangladesh is neither an unmixed trouble nor an absolute blessing. Rather, teaching and learning through online here offers a mixture of both advantages and disadvantages though the latter holds the lions share, so the views of the teachers and learners participating in this study reveal.

The positive aspects of online teaching are found to be, according to the teachers' point of view, time-saving, needing no large place or infrastructure, possible to be done from home or anywhere, allowing audio-visual lessons to be uploaded, and the re-utilization of the recorded classes; and, according to the students' point of view, virtual class participation, recorded classes being possible to be learnt from in learners' own free time, omnipresent class participation, respite from transport hassle, conveyance and various sorts of pollutions, and safety as well as social distancing. On the other hand, the obstacles faced by the teachers in the present mode of online education in Bangladesh are insufficient logistic support from the institutes, unavailable and slow internet supply, students' want of required technological devices, students' unaffordability to purchase internet connection/data, learners' disinterestedness in virtual classroom, lack of sufficient

financial support to the teachers, insufficient technological support, distant learners' inability to connect, family issues and kids. While majority of the virtual classroom-related impediments faced by the students are common among those faced by the teachers, some different issues are load shedding, unskilled teachers in terms of online classes, and little or no interactions between teacher and students.

In consistence with the aforementioned challenges faced in the virtual classrooms of English language teaching in particular or in academic education in general amidst the ongoing COVID-19 shutdown in Bangladesh, both the teachers and students responding to the questionnaires of this study offer a number of crucial propositions for making teaching and learning via online classrooms a feasible alternative. While, on the teachers' part, the propositions are free supply of technological devices and apps, provision of uninterrupted and fast internet service, arrangement of special training on the execution of online teaching-learning sessions for both teachers and learners, institutional possession of updated technological equipment, and learner motivation; students' propositions, besides conforming with those of the teachers, are skilled teachers and free internet data support as well as Wi-Fi facility across the country. All of these above mentioned findings are sorted out and, as such, highlighted in diagrams below as teachers' perceptions and students' perceptions for a distinct understanding of the boons and banes of, and recommendations for virtual classrooms in current circumstances in Bangladesh.

### Findings (Teachers' Perceptions)

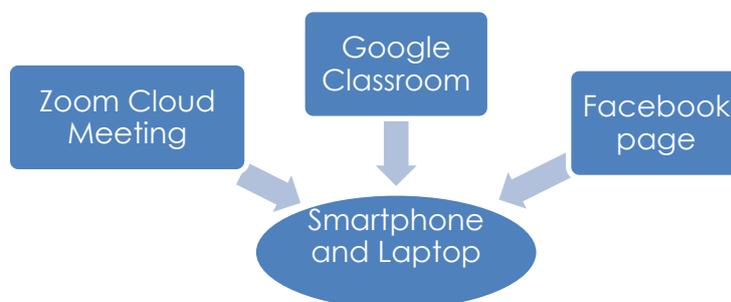


Figure-1: Devices and Apps used in Online ELT classes in Bangladesh

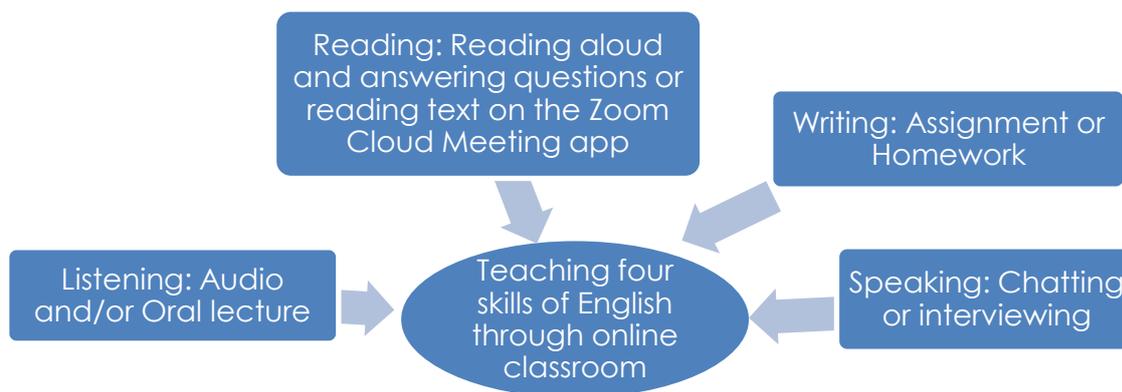


Figure-2: How four skills of English are taught through online classes.

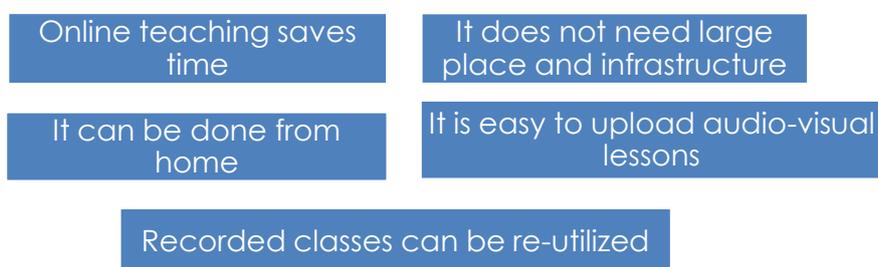


Figure-3: Advantages of teaching English through online classes

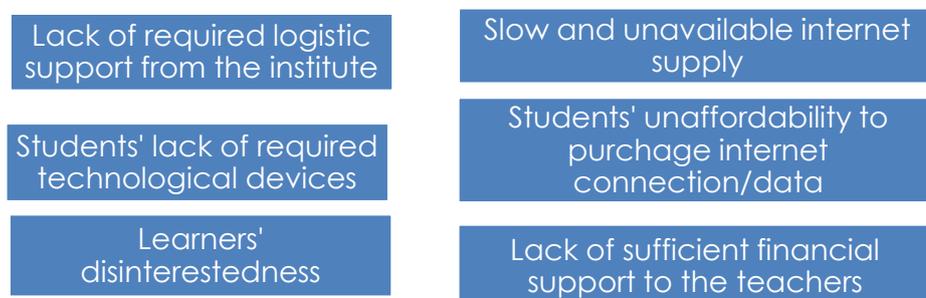


Figure-4: Obstacles faced by teachers while teaching through online classroom in general

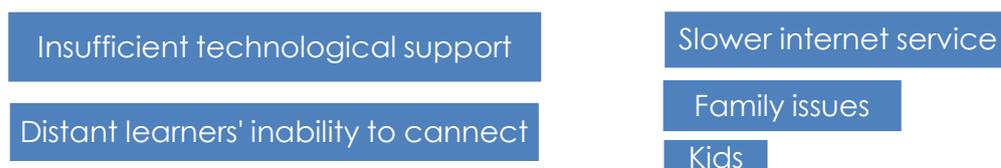


Figure-5: Impediments teachers face while teaching English online.

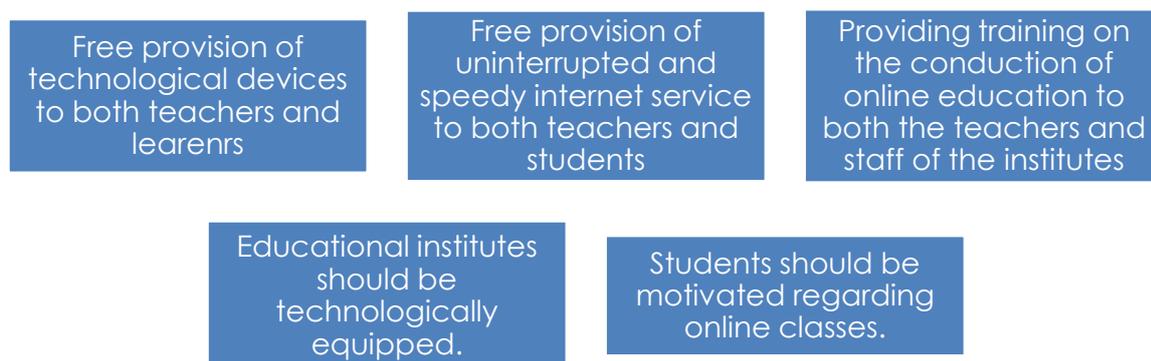


Figure-6: Teachers' suggestions on the implementation of online classes.

### Analysis (Teachers' Perception)

All the 50 teachers interviewed in the study affirm that they teach through online classes, among who 70% use smartphones and 30% use laptops, in which 57% use Zoom Cloud Meeting App, 43% use Google classroom, 28% utilize both while 14% record their classes in their Smartphones and then upload the videos on their Facebook pages.

71% of the teachers have to continue teaching through virtual classes at their own expense, i.e. they themselves have to manage whatever technological as well as internet support needed for enacting online classes whereas 29% receive institutional Wi-Fi-internet support along with necessary technological devices.

57% of the participants find that majority of the students do not have affordability for internet supply and thus very few possess required privileges to learn through online classes. 71% teachers think that 10%-15% of the learners have required technological and internet support to attend and learn in the virtual classes. 28% find the students not interested in online classes, not prepared at all regarding learning through online classes and having no urge to learn via online. Of the participating teachers, 14% are from Cadet Colleges, who state that most of the Cadet College Students have required privileges to learn through online sessions.

57% teachers say that many of the students lack the necessary devices for having access to online classes while 43% of them observe that students lack the know-how regarding the use of the devices and apps. 28% find many students suffering from nervousness and inertial phobia to be online while 14% regard that students are taking time to accept innovation, lack in positive mindset, cannot keep

concentration on online classes for a long time. Some teachers (14%) present that tribal and poor students stay in distant places and they cannot get proper internet connection thereby they fail to participate the online classes.

Some (29%) of the participants confirm that they do not face any major sort of obstacle to arrange and conduct online classes for the students as their institutions provide them with sufficient internet as well as other logistic facilities. But most (71%) of the teachers affirm that they face quite a number of problems while teaching students in online classes, e.g. the learners can ignore the class switching on Zoom meeting, they can do chatting with others, class time is limited, students do not attend the class at a time as it happens in real classrooms, more time is spent in the setting, less teaching and learning is done, internet speed is slow and interrupted, students lose concentration, fewer students attend the online class etc. A small number of (14%) teachers say with dissatisfaction that their institutions (mostly non-government) pay them half or one-third of the monthly salary during COVID-19 lockdown, which obstructs the smooth and satisfactory discharge of their duty.

Majority (57%) of the participating teachers sense that continuation of national education through online classes is not feasible, but with necessary modifications like teacher training on the essential skills of conducting online classes and student training on the basics of online classes, it can act satisfactorily. 43% of the teachers strongly opine that continuation of education through online system is not viable in Bangladesh, for the country possesses many online-related obstacles, like not all areas of the country have received internet facility, many teachers do not have the basic know-how regarding online teaching, many students, especially the ones from remote rural areas, have almost no technological as well as internet related skills, many students come from insolvent families and thus cannot afford essential technology and internet support etc.

For listening skill, about 57% of the respondents assure that they play the audio and the students answer the questions provided beforehand whereas about 43% of them say that the listening skill is indirectly taught through the oral lecture they deliver. For reading skill, approximately 71% of the teachers use normal method of reading and answering questions by asking the students to read aloud the text and answer the questions following while about 29% of them use Zoom Cloud Meeting and its 'share screen' option to make and help learners read and comprehend. For

writing skill, 25 (50%) of the teachers give the students related topics as assignment with definite number of words and a time limit whereas another 25 (50%) of the teachers especially those mostly from secondary and higher secondary institutes give the students homework to be done in written format in accordance with the syllabus. For speaking, about 64% of the teachers present that they just chat with the learners and comment where necessary but about 36% of them assert that they interview the students with questions chosen to help them speak and learn to speak better in English.

64% of the participants highlight that teaching through online classes saves time and 42% mention that it does not need large place and infrastructure and can be done from home, which is quite relaxing. 37 (74%) teachers point out that providing audio-visual classes to students is easier through virtual classes, and classes can be recorded to be re-utilized anytime next.

84% of the responding teachers talk about the impediments they face while teaching English online. About 60% of them declare shortage of technological support and fluctuations of net speed. Around 36% of the teachers encountering impediments while teaching through online classes say that students from distant places cannot connect, which makes the arrangement questionable whereas approximately 24% of them refer to family issues, like kids as causing troubles to teach in the virtual classroom.

Around 86% of the respondents prefer onsite mode of teaching English with more or less modifications whereas only about 14% of them vote for exclusive online teaching. Accordingly, this research finds that teaching via online classrooms completely satisfies only about 29% of the teachers albeit in consideration with the COVID-19 circumstances, but it leaves majority (about 71%) of the teachers dissatisfied somehow or other.

Majority of the teachers (71%) are loud and emphatic to say that firstly every teacher and student should be provided with technological devices like Laptop, Smartphone etc., who have none of them. Secondly, every teacher and student must be provided with all kinds of technological supports including internet data plan/ mobile data plan (GB, gigabytes). Thirdly, every academic and non-academic staff must be trained properly relating to online education.

As for suggestions to implement online classes with success, 50% of the respondents emphasize the necessity of properly providing strong internet connection and internet facilities to all beneficiaries of online education and about 46% of them suggest that institution itself should be well-equipped with internet facilities. 20% of the teachers reveal that students have to be motivated for online class while 18% of them propose that teachers and other organizations have to ensure optimum service so that students get confidence regarding virtual teaching.

**Findings (Students' Perception)**



Figure-7: Devices and apps used by students to participate and learn in online classes.

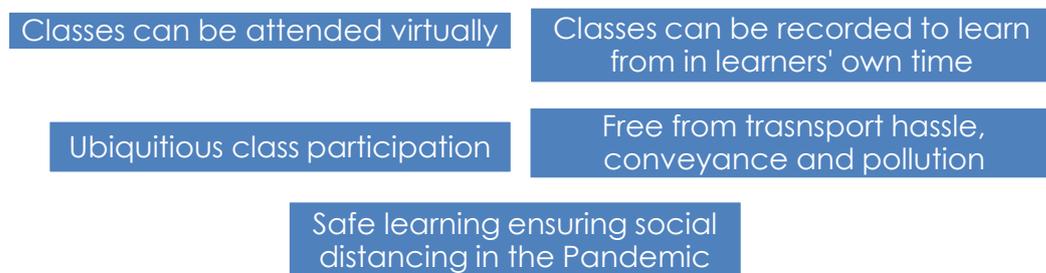


Figure-8: Students' perception on the advantages of online classes.

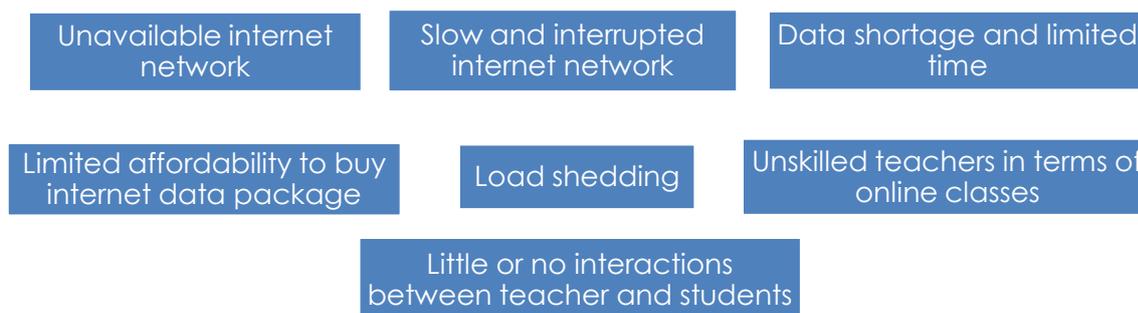


Figure-9: Challenges faced by students to learn through online classes.

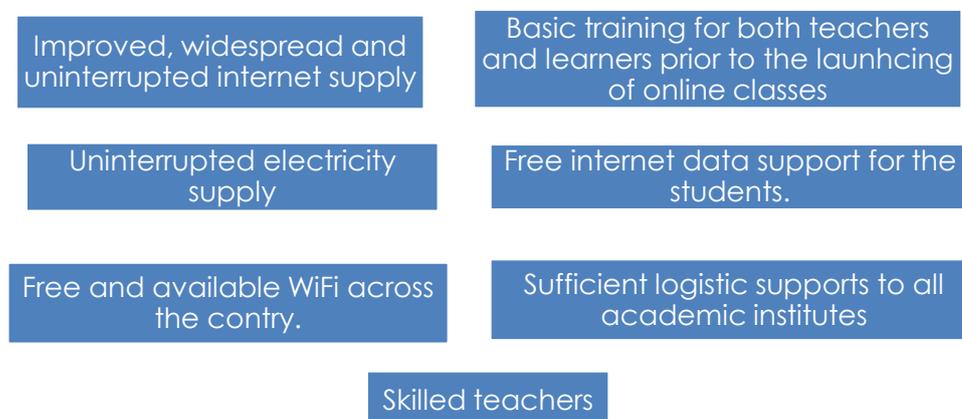


Figure-10: Students' suggestions for feasible and pragmatic online ELT classes during COVID-19 lockdown in Bangladesh.

### Analysis (Students' perception)

All 50 students participating in the survey stated that they attend online classes arranged by their respective institute during COVID-19 pandemic. Each and every one of them (100%) use Zoom Apps and about 62% of them use Google Classroom in their Smartphones to learn through online classes. In case of technological device, about 12% of the students use personal computer and around 25% of them laptop as devices to attend the online classes. Cent percent of the students assure that they do not receive any internet coverage-related support from their institutes although almost 25% of them say that their institutes have Wi-Fi support at the campus premises, but it is to no purpose at this moment of Coronavirus pandemic since students are not supposed to go to the campus now. Regarding internet facility, 100% of the respondents affirm that they have to arrange online support and as such attend online classes with the expenses met by their families or by themselves.

Of the 50 students participating in the study, approximately 70% vouch for a number of advantages of virtual learning during this pandemic lockdown across the country, such as: classes can be attended from remote area, classes can be recorded and thus learnt from in learners' own times, students do not have to go to

the campus in person, classes can be participated in from anywhere and everywhere, no transport hassle/no conveyance/ no pollution has to be endured, students are able to attend class and continue learning even during these pandemic days, they get reminder/notification before the class, if the classes are missed, they can be learnt later from recorded video. In terms of the benefits of online classes, about 30% of the respondents do not think online classes have any mentionable advantage.

As to the troubles the learners face while or for attending online classes, around 87% of the students responding to the survey questions talk about internet-network related problems, like unavailable internet network, slow internet speed and buffering while 50% expose constraints, like data shortage, limited financial affordability to buy data package, limited time, teacher speaking all time, no way to ask him/ her any question. In the same regard, about 14% of the participants mention personal issues whereas another same number of students reveal that answers of the online exam questionnaire can be easily obtained from Google.

Approximately 43% of the participating students opine that online classes are making them used to learning from online, helping them explore new things. On the other hand, about 71% of the prefer onsite class, for it provides real atmosphere for study, face to face learning, uninterrupted discussion, study related documents, proper understanding and scope to face real situation where learners can communicate with teachers.

The participants were also asked if they are satisfied with the result they achieve through taking test via online, to which around 43% replied in the affirmative whereas about 14% in the negative, and another 43% informed that their result was not published till then.

With regard to the feasibility of virtual classes in Bangladesh, almost 29% of the participants supported the idea while about 71% of them opposed it as they think they cannot afford net bills, and there is little/no internet connection in remote areas. Nearly 42% of the students went so far to remark that virtual education in Bangladesh, especially in private institutes, is just a way to earn money from students although 21% of them thought that the idea of online class is innovative, but the process being followed in this country is faulty.

As to how English language education along with other sorts of learning can be virtually accomplished during the COVID-19 lockdown in Bangladesh, the students participating as sample population in this research had their own suggestions, like about 86% of them suggested smooth and high speed internet network system all over the country and teachers' training while around 29% of them went for students' training, uninterrupted electric supply, and free data support from the government/institute/University Grand Commission.

### Conclusion

COVID-19 pandemic has been driving an incessant massacre almost all over the world for about more than a year up to now and no one has the slightest idea as to when the virus may leave humanity in peace. WHO has predicted that the world might have to survive with the virus for years. Since opening up and continuing onsite education with students and teachers around is a question of life and death, many countries including Bangladesh have no option other than embracing this 'new normal' mode of teaching and learning. Likewise, the learners and teachers of English language are in the same boat. Therefore, the findings of this research and the further ones are worth considering in terms of making online ELT classroom an acceptable reality.

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