

Institutional Monitoring and Feedback in Developing and Delivering Online EFL Courses: A Case Study¹

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Abstract

The sudden outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated a paradigm shift from face-to-face to online teaching of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) courses through widely recognized virtual platforms. The suddenness of the movement did not give enough time for the tertiary-level EFL teachers in Bangladesh to be prepared. In consequence, the sustainability of higher educational institutions was at stake since ensuring English education to the students of all majors is one of the crucial demands of the respective stakeholders. The academic harmonization of these higher educational institutions requires institutional intervention in terms of monitoring the quality of education and giving feedback to the teachers. This study investigates the role that an institutional monitoring and feedback system played in developing and delivering online EFL courses in a private university in Bangladesh, which is relatively unexplored by international and local research. A mixed methods research design was used: a questionnaire survey and two focus group discussions. Participants were EFL teachers and administrative officers involved in the process of central monitoring and feedback system of the institution. The analysis critically seeks to discover the perceptions of the participants on three issues: (i) the impact of institutional monitoring and feedback; (ii) areas of teaching-learning pedagogy that the process addressed; and (iii) challenges and suggestions. The results show that the teachers benefitted greatly from this system in general, but it did not address specific issues related to EFL courses. The system lacked the involvement of the stakeholders in policymaking and assessment rubric formation. The study suggests that EFL courses should be monitored differently than other courses and EFL teachers should be empowered and involved directly with the decision-making process of central monitoring and feedback system.

Resumen

El repentino brote de la pandemia de COVID-19 requirió un cambio de paradigma de la enseñanza presencial a la enseñanza en línea de cursos de inglés como lengua extranjera (EFL) a través de plataformas virtuales ampliamente reconocidas. Lo repentino del movimiento no dio suficiente tiempo para que los profesores de EFL de nivel terciario en Bangladesh estuvieran preparados. En consecuencia, la sostenibilidad de las instituciones de educación superior estaba en juego, ya que garantizar la educación en inglés a los estudiantes de todas las carreras es una de las demandas cruciales de las respectivas partes interesadas. La armonización académica de estas instituciones de educación superior requiere de una intervención institucional en cuanto al seguimiento de la calidad de la educación y la retroalimentación a los docentes. Este estudio investiga el papel que desempeñó un sistema institucional de monitoreo y retroalimentación en el desarrollo y la entrega de cursos de EFL en línea en una universidad privada en Bangladesh, que es relativamente poco explorado por la investigación internacional y local. Se utilizó un diseño de investigación de métodos mixtos: una encuesta de cuestionario y dos discusiones de grupos focales. Los participantes fueron profesores de EFL y funcionarios administrativos involucrados en el proceso de monitoreo central y sistema de retroalimentación de la institución. El análisis busca de manera crítica conocer las percepciones de los participantes sobre tres temas: (i) el impacto del seguimiento y retroalimentación institucional; (ii) áreas de la pedagogía de enseñanza-aprendizaje que abordó el proceso; y (iii) desafíos y sugerencias. Los resultados muestran que los profesores se beneficiaron mucho de este sistema en general, pero no abordó problemas específicos relacionados con los cursos de inglés como lengua extranjera. El sistema carecía de la participación de las partes interesadas en la formulación de políticas y la formación de rúbricas de evaluación. El estudio sugiere que los cursos de EFL deben monitorearse de manera diferente a otros cursos y los profesores de EFL deben estar empoderados e involucrados directamente con el proceso de toma de decisiones del sistema central de monitoreo y retroalimentación.

Introduction

According to Drent and Meelissen (2008), Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has gained immense significance in research on educational reform in the last two decades. The inclusion of ICT in education by installing computer labs and training teachers in all higher education institutions paved the way for online teaching. In the last few years with the advancement of ICT, people in Bangladesh have developed a habit of an e-social life on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram although these spaces have been rarely utilized for higher education instruction. The COVID-19 pandemic changed the scenario. As universities were closed to stop the spread of the virus, online platforms like *Google Classroom*, *Google Meet*, *Zoom*, *Moodle*, and other educational websites were explored and used by a large number of people,

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including academics and the administrative officers of higher education institutions through Web 2.0 tools. Since the middle of March 2020, various wings of the government of Bangladesh like the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Information Technology, and the University Grants Commission (UGC) worked to ensure the continuity of education of students during the emergency. When updated ICT facilities became crucial for the diffusion of technology (Gülbahar, 2007), the sudden decision to conduct online classes at higher education institutions without providing up-to-date hardware and software was evaluated as 'suicidal' by many intellectuals of the country. It also was said to create educational discrimination as all the people of Bangladesh did not have the same digital facilities. It is evident that by accepting such a digital divide and the consequent education inequality, virtual platforms were chosen only to save education from being discontinued.

Much of the teachers' reluctance and lack of experience in using technology resulted in ill-prepared lessons. Almusalam (2001) identified teachers' attitudes as a major predictor of updated technologies in instructional settings. According to Khan et al. (2012), if teachers want to successfully use technology in their classes, they need to possess positive attitudes to the use of technology. Afshari et al. (2009), pointed out that positive attitudes to the use of technology are possible only when the teachers are comfortable with the technology. Consequently, the lack of engaging lessons resulted in students' passive attendance, i.e., joining the online classes through the given link, and then turning off the camera and microphone, and not participating in class activities at all.

Nevertheless, students in the rural areas became anxious thinking about how to cope up with the tremendous difficulties in attending the scheduled online classes due to electrical disruptions and a lack of reliable internet connection. The suddenness of the pandemic outbreak also compelled many students to leave their campus area at once and move to their village homes even forgetting their laptops, which has created difficulties in submitting the assignments. Even the students of urban areas were not free from being affected by the low-speed internet connection, which hampered timely submission of different academic tasks such as assignments, presentations, project papers, and exams. The low-speed internet connection also led the students to use unfair means such as copying from peers, internet, and teachers' handouts during the online examinations.

Like most private universities in Bangladesh, Daffodil International University operated on a trimester schedule and also was mid-way through a semester when lock-down was announced by the government. However, the university was in a far better position in operating online classes than many other universities in Bangladesh because of its teachers and students' acquaintance with blended learning platforms like *Google Classroom* since 2014 and a *Moodle* repository known as *DIU Blended Learning Center (DIUBLC)* since 2016. However, the mode of operation of these platforms was only limited to sharing course contents and announcements on the part of the teachers, and to submitting assignments and responding to announcements on the part of the students. Therefore, when the need of conducting 'exclusive' online EFL classes first arose, the faculty members of the institution found it rather challenging despite their orientation with those operational platforms. As a result, the necessity of ensuring active learning, teacher-student engagement, and application of classroom learning into real life situations, higher education innovation, and confirmation of the prospective employers' satisfaction for the sustainability of the institution seemed out of reach on a virtual platform. At this very point, institutional intervention was required. Its implementation was expedited by the harmonized relationship between the administration and the faculty members of the university.

Video demonstrations of how to use DIUBLC archived in the university webpage since 2018, were insufficient to address all the issues essential for the successful online teaching. Therefore, on the basis of their regular monitoring, an assigned group of administrators from Daffodil International University started to organize live training programs in which the experienced in-house faculty members were asked to share their best practices. This was later extended to inviting national and international experts on the required fields to deliver webinars. The current research aims to find out the role of such institutional monitoring and feedback system in developing and delivering online EFL courses.

Research Questions

This study investigates how effective institutional monitoring and feedback is in terms of teaching EFL courses online and the shortcomings in the implementation of the system. The study also identifies the areas that are given importance and the areas ignored. The research strives to answer the following research questions:

1. How did institutional monitoring and feedback benefit in developing and delivering online EFL courses?
2. What were the areas of teaching-learning pedagogy that the process addressed?
3. What were the challenges in the implementation of the process?
4. What suggestions for future development in institutional monitoring and feedback did the participants recommend?

Literature Review

Principles of an ideal virtual EFL classroom

The success of online EFL courses essentially depends on the choice of the appropriate technology. However, the usage of Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) in a face-to-face classroom is significantly different than when it is used on online platforms. While in the face-to-face EFL classrooms, CALL is utilized to complement the spontaneous interaction (a crucial component of successful EFL courses) among a community of students who are physically present on online platforms, it is the only tool to mitigate the distance between the students with their peers and their teachers who are in different geographical locations and are being connected via different network facilities. These limitations demand, "careful distance learning program design decisions" to compensate "the lack of proximity between instructor and learners" (Doughty and Long, 2003. p.51). Clark (1985) pointed out that the design principles (systematic thinking about the organization of information, examples, and requirements for active responding) are more important than the delivery system when it comes to computer-based instruction programs. Doughty and Long (2003) have referred to the ten methodological principles of Task-Based Language Teaching prescribed by Long (1985) as a guide to deciding appropriate technological options in distance-learning situations. The principles are as follows: (1) usage of the task, not text; (2) promotion of learning by doing; (3) elaboration of input; (4) provision of rich input; (5) encouragement of inductive ('chunk') learning; (6) focus on form while disseminating meaning; (7) provision of negative feedback; (8) respecting developmental processes and learner syllabi; (9) promotion of collaborative learning; and (10) individualized instruction.

As far as careful designing is concerned for the success of online EFL courses, in another study by Tsai and Talley (2014), it is evident that the experimental group of Taiwanese students of their study outperformed the controlled group in their significant application of metacognitive and cognitive strategies in a reading comprehension test, as the former was exposed to a Moodle supported "specific reading strategy training" which included "reading exercises on problem identification, monitoring comprehension, inference, summarizing, transfer, resourcing and questioning for clarification" (p. 422).

Apart from non-interactive technology, Computer-Mediated Communications (CMC) through Web 2.0 have been considered by many online EFL educators in recent times as a dynamic gateway to reach students' social e-life. Dang and Robertson (2010) stated that the socio-cultural theory (SCT) was adopted by some researchers to examine various learning variables in CMC integrated learning environments, which offer a platform for rigorous interactions, collaborations, and negotiations among learners both synchronously and asynchronously. Some of the most popular CMC platforms through web 2.0 are e-mail, weblogs (e.g., Downes, 2004; Mortensen, 2008), discussion boards (e.g., Bhappu et al., 2009), social network sites (Boyd & Ellison, 2007; Ellison et al., 2007), and instant messenger (e.g., Jacobs, 2008; Lewis & Fabos, 2005), which students are habituated to explore regularly. Web 2.0 tools can also be utilized by EFL teachers for extended practice like monitoring, guiding, and evaluating their students (Whyte, as cited in Johnson, 2011). Additionally, these tools can be used to facilitate different types of projects and assignments both for individuals and groups (Johnson & Marsh, 2014). Furthermore, by exploring the less anxiety-ridden setting of web 2.0 tools, real-life speaking and writing skills can be practiced for developing students' L2 confidence (Cheng et al., 2010; Salcedo, 2010).

In task-based online EFL environments, *YouTube* videos are widely regarded as a rich online audio-visual resource to motivate learners. However, improper utilization of this resource can threaten inter-student interaction and thus hamper student-centeredness by making students passive viewers. By assigning students to produce instructional video projects, through three stages, namely, (i) researching the *YouTube* videos on the chosen topic; (ii) discussing the contents of the chosen videos with their team members; and (iii) producing similar kinds of *YouTube* videos by collaborating with each other, students can be transformed from mere consumers to prosumers while developing both receptive and productive skills simultaneously. In such projects of public interest, students are also found to provide constructive criticism to their peers to come up with more flawless and professional videos as a safeguard to their self-esteem (Hamilton, 2010).

Artificial intelligence-based Chatbot support during online EFL pre-class discussion is proposed to be considered for the enhancement of students' interaction during in-class discussions. One such example is borne in the study of Goda et al., (2014), where the experimental group of students exposed to a Socratic inquiry method-based Chatbot Eliza before an online EFL group discussion, was found not only to exceed the control group of students in their extent of participation during the in-class group discussion, but also to demonstrate far better critical thinking awareness and inquiring mindset than the later ones.

The provision of appropriate feedback is one of the core components of the success of any EFL course. The appropriateness depends not only on the extent of grammatical accurateness of the feedback but also on how the approach is perceived by both the teacher and the students. Involving 607 Colombian foreign language (FL) students and 122 of their teachers along with 824 FL students from the United States and their 92 teachers, Schulz (2001) found that the discrepancy of teacher-student belief systems can be detrimental to learning a new language as far as explicit corrective feedback is concerned. It requires the teachers to explore the students' perceptions regarding the factors enhancing the rate of learning a target language and to resolve possible instructional conflicts. Such an attempt unquestionably demands more careful planning on the part of the EFL teachers when it is to be undertaken in a distance learning setting. To teach English to a large number of students, the Universidad de Concepción in Chile created a Communicative English Program by using the *Udec English Online* software. With the help of expert technicians from the university, the EFL teaching team also engaged the EFL students in an interactive multimedia environment facilitating human-computer, human-human, and intrapersonal interactions. Drawing on the studies by Lyster and Ranta (1997) and Ferreira-Cabrera (2003) on effective corrective feedback strategies, the online program provides feedback beyond the typical "That's right"/"That's wrong" answers. More specifically, on the completion of each task, students are awarded a three-fold immediate feedback consisting of an automatic written or spoken comment, a score (on a 1-7 scale usually used in the Chilean education system) and a reaction from the section coach through emoticons of smiling, jumping, and nodding (Bañados, 2006). Apart from these, considering the influence of peer feedback on language development, telecollaborative exchanges are at work in many online language teaching platforms where native speaker students of the target language are required to provide feedback to their peers on linguistic forms if incorrect (Ware, 2008).

Institutional Monitoring and Feedback

Uncontrollable emergency situations may sometimes cause a sudden paradigm in instructional methodology and reduce the sustainability of higher education institutions. Eventually, such unforeseen predicaments call for the immediate intervention of institutional monitoring and feedback, which, in many ways, is a shared responsibility. However, as the process demands work at the managerial level from the very outset to address the issues concerned. On identifying the effectiveness of principals' supervision of teachers' instructional tasks in his study, Ayeni (2012) randomly involved 60 principals and 540 teachers from 60 secondary schools of the Ondo state of Nigeria. Ayeni (2012) recommended several monitoring techniques suggested by Ogunsaju (1983) and Peretomode (1995). The techniques are the clinical supervision technique, the research approach, the micro-teaching, and the seminar/workshop approach. According to Goldhammer (1969), the clinical supervision technique is a five-stage process, namely, (i) pre-observation conference between supervisor and teacher concerning elements of the lesson to be observed; (ii) classroom observation; (iii) supervisor's analysis notes; (iv) post-observation conference between supervisor and teacher; and (v) supervisor's analysis of the post-observation conference. The research approach is more democratic because the supervisor engages the teachers in action research to find out solutions for their identified teaching-learning problems. The micro-teaching is a more reflective approach where the teacher along with the supervisor and the students look for developing new skills of teaching by video recording their taught lessons. Also, by repeating the lessons with the same group applying the feedback, the seminar/workshop approach comprises of a small group of people who critically analyze specific topic of some common teaching-learning problems of the institute through exploring hands-on experiences.

In another study, considering students as important stakeholders of the institutional monitoring system, Al-Mahrooqi et al. (2015) engaged 62 English language foundation students at Oman's Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) in evaluating various aspects of the English foundation program of the university. Based on their study, they proposed culture-based EFL text-books and more input from students in developing curriculum design. Materials development, teacher-student preparation, and time-to-time course evaluation were also marked by the teacher and the student participants of the study of McDonough and

Chaikitmongkol (2007), as the important components for the success of a task-based EFL course in Chiang Mai University, Thailand.

As far as institutional monitoring and feedback in the higher education sector is concerned, Bangladesh faces a number of issues in terms of cultural acceptance. People in Bangladesh, especially academics, are not accustomed to the culture of formal monitoring systems, and 'feedback' most of the time is perceived as negative. Sometimes, multiple higher education stakeholders are institutionally approached from the individual level of some of the private universities, but the accumulation of response from all the stakeholders is rare, and the implementation of the respondents' feedback is far-fetched, as education at the private sector in Bangladesh is more of a money-making business enterprise than of a knowledge-generating endeavor. The same kind of profit motive in operating higher education institutions was mentioned by Nurrannabi (2014) in the studies of Alam (2009) in Bangladesh, Holzacker et al. (2009) in Mongolia, and Ukraine and Morley (2014) in Ghana and Tanzania.

Method

The purpose of this research was to analyze the role of institutional monitoring and feedback in developing and delivering online EFL courses in an extraordinary situation like the COVID-19 pandemic, and to find out whether institutional intervention was effective enough to ensure similar outcomes to that of traditional on-site classes. The researchers tried to explore all pros and cons of institutional monitoring and feedback for online EFL classes in Bangladesh. To do so, the mixed methods research (MMR) design was used. Johnson et al. (2007) defines MMR as:

...the type of research in which a researcher or team of researchers combines elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches (e.g., use of qualitative and quantitative viewpoints, data collection, analysis, inference techniques) for the broad purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration. (p. 123)

Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were used in this case study to strengthen the study's conclusion and to contribute to the existing literature (Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2017). The purpose of using a mixed method design was to elaborate, enhance, illustrate, and clarify results from the survey with the results of focus group discussions as mentioned by Greene et al. (1989) with the term complementarity.

Informed Consent

The participants were informed about the research before they were sent a questionnaire via a *Google Forms* link. They participated in this study voluntarily. They were assured that their privacy would not be breached, and the data would only be used for educational purposes. They also gave their oral consent before focus group discussions.

Questionnaire Survey

An informal 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 'Strongly Agree' to 5 'Strongly Disagree' (except the last one, number 15) including 15 items was created using *Google Forms*, and the link was sent to the EFL teachers who participated in this study (Appendix 1). The participants were given instructions at the beginning of the questionnaire form to choose one of the options that match their thoughts. The results were then evaluated using Google's inbuilt online survey response system that provided an automatic percentage with figures. Here is an example from the questionnaire:

3. *Immediate intervention of my institute through monitoring and feedback has guided me at the different phases of my online EFL course conduction.*

a. Strongly Disagree b. Disagree c. Neutral d. Agree e. Strongly Agree.

Focus Group Discussion 1 and 2

As a proven tool that emerged as a qualitative data collection approach and a strategy to bridge the gap between scientific research and local knowledge (Cornwall & Jewkes, 1995), focus group discussions were needed for a clear picture of the situation that the teachers and university administration were in at the early stage of the COVID-19 pandemic when they had to shift from conventional physical classrooms to digital ones. Focus group discussions have been used for sociological research since the 1940s, and it is believed that the method offers a 'promising alternative' in participatory research (Morgan, 1996) and a platform for differing paradigms or worldviews (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

In order to obtain an in-depth understanding of the views of the teachers and administrators directly involved in the process of the role of institutional monitoring and feedback in developing and delivering

online EFL courses, the qualitative part of the study was done by organizing two focus group discussions: one with the teachers and the other with the top-level administrators. Ten semi-structured questions related to research questions were asked (Appendix 2). The participants then discussed and answered these questions in their own ways. These sessions were conducted via *Google Meet*.

Participants

The study was conducted with fifteen university teachers (who taught elementary English language skills to the first and second-semester students) and two top-level administrators (who directly observed the monitoring and feedback system). All of the teachers had previous practical knowledge and basic training on using technology, as it was a central policy of the university to engage students in online activities. The administrators were also involved in the use of technology for monitoring and feedback purposes prior to the COVID-19 period. However, they were only invited to participate in the focus group discussions; they did not participate in the questionnaire survey.

Analysis

The data collected through questionnaire survey and focus group discussions one and two were analyzed using a descriptive model. Graphics were used to exhibit questionnaire data. First, the questionnaire survey data were analyzed, and then the discussion was organized.

Results and Discussion

As most of the teachers agreed that online EFL classes were very different from traditional offline classes, a total shift from offline to online learning because of the COVID-19 pandemic had forced them to enter into a new system that was previously used only partially as a part of the institution's digital teaching-learning initiatives (Figure 1).

1. Online EFL classes are similar to that of offline EFL classes in terms of teaching and learning outcomes.
15 responses

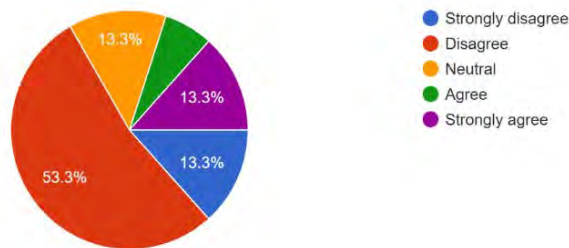


Figure 1: Teaching-learning outcomes of online and offline EFL classes

In spite of being familiar with digital education, 75% of the teachers answered 'yes' to the statement that they were given a little or no time to prepare for the sudden paradigm shift, which left them off guard in a haphazard situation, thus a need for the immediate intervention of the institution with proper monitoring and feedback was required. (Figure 2).

2. The suddenness of paradigm shift from offline to online teaching has not spared enough time for the EFL teachers to be prepared.
15 responses

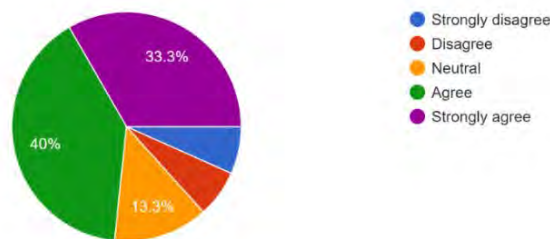


Figure 2: Preparation time for EFL teachers for going online

Based on the information obtained from both teachers and top-level administrators, the institution was swift to take immediate action and to establish a monitoring and feedback system with the help of their pre-

existing state-of-the-art online platform *Blended Learning System* (BLC). Although more than half of the participants acknowledged that it did help them in terms of conducting online EFL courses, a good number of teachers disagreed (13.3%), while another 13.3% remained neutral (Figure 3), which clearly indicates that the system initiated by the institution was not fully effective. When discussing further, the teachers commented that the system was designed to help teachers conduct online classes in general, but considering the unique features and needs of EFL classes, there were no specific guidelines offered to the EFL teachers. They explored different self-learning avenues on their own accord to mitigate the gaps of their online EFL teaching. Top-level administrative officers responsible for maintaining the monitoring and feedback system admitted that they did not include anything in the system specifically for EFL courses (Figure 3).

3. Immediate intervention of my institute through monitoring and feedback has guided me at the different phases of my online EFL course conduction.
15 responses

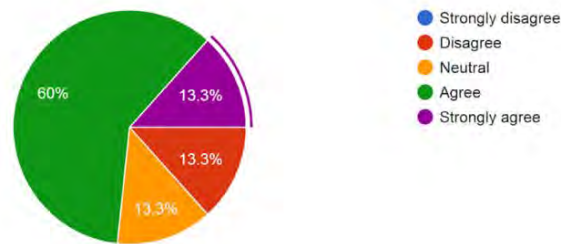


Figure 3: Institutional intervention through monitoring and feedback system

However, when it comes to addressing the teaching-learning pedagogies for EFL courses, the system failed in many ways, but it was a huge success in simplifying the students' feedback process. The teachers disagreed greatly with the fact that the monitoring objectives should be the same for general courses and EFL courses, but the system did not include any monitoring objectives specific to the last ones. The facilitators of EFL courses made it very clear in the discussion that the whole process would have been far more effective if EFL classes were monitored, keeping the objectives precise for EFL courses. Also, half of the participants disagreed that the direct involvement of technology and the availability of online data made it more effective compared to the way conventional EFL courses were monitored. Nevertheless, the system showed outstanding efficiency when it comes to dealing with students' feedback. The success rate is one hundred percent (Figure 4). However, during the discussion, it was observed that the teachers were not serious about students' feedback and none of them could establish the effectiveness of their way of giving feedback to the students. It is alarming because giving feedback to the students is an important part of a distance learning setting.

6. Students' feedback is recorded in a more convenient way for online EFL classes.
15 responses

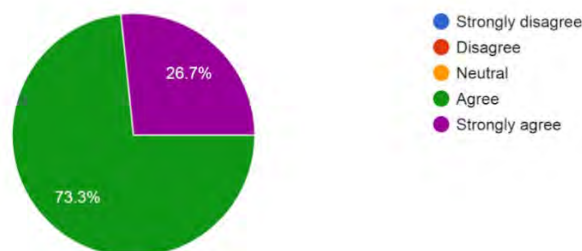


Figure 4: Receiving students' feedback

In addition, the monitoring system turned out to be very important on many fronts, including ensuring the quality of teaching and improving teaching-learning in EFL classes according to the teachers. Most of them (more than 70% in both cases) supported the use of the existing monitoring and feedback system, but they suggested that the objectives and monitoring criteria be reshaped and updated. In the focus group discussion, they stated their dissatisfaction about the present objectives and monitoring criteria, as they wanted them to be designed specifically for EFL courses, not general ones. The administration stated that the monitoring team was very willing to accept users' feedback, but the EFL-specific monitoring criteria were not set. They also admitted that it was not a part of their monitoring and feedback policy to include EFL-specific criteria.

Furthermore, the study brought up a very significant issue generally ignored (i.e., teachers' academic freedom). Vrielink et al. (2011) stated, "Academic freedom is generally considered a *sine qua non* for the proper functioning of modern universities" (p. 118). Despite the confusion about what exactly the right entails or should entail, academic freedom should be taken into consideration while administrators monitor teaching and provide feedback. The majority of the teachers participating in the study thought that the existing system somehow undermined their academic freedom, as they were being evaluated on the basis of generalized teacher assessment rubrics applied by the monitoring and feedback team (Figure 5).

10. Institutional Monitoring and feedback systems sometimes undermine EFL teachers' freedom.
15 responses

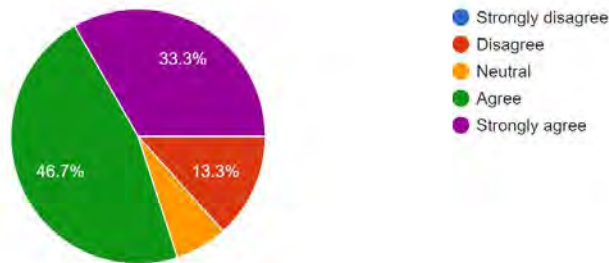


Figure 5: Undermining EFL teachers' freedom

While most of the participants did not deny the immense importance of including evaluation rubrics in the monitoring and feedback system, their major concern was the lack of involvement of teachers and students in the process. They asserted that the rubrics would work perfectly if the teachers' and students' opinions were taken into account prior to revising the rubrics. They also stated that the rubrics should be available before every semester, so that they could have enough time to adapt to the updated rubrics (Figure 6).

13. The institutional monitoring and feedback rubrics should be utilized in developing the quality of online EFL courses
15 responses

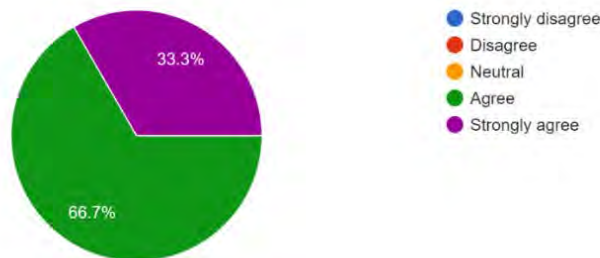


Figure 6: Monitoring and feedback rubrics

However, half of the participants were against using the rubrics to evaluate teachers with a view of cutting their financial benefits during the pandemic, and the other half of the participants remained neutral, which led us to believe that none of the participants actually supported this move by the institution (Figure 7).

14. If the monitoring and feedback rubrics of an institute are used to cut financial benefits of teachers and students in a pandemic situation, it will affect the sustainability of the institute.
15 responses

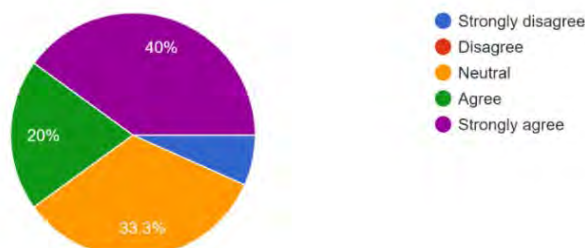


Figure 7: Financial benefits and the sustainability of the institute.

Conclusions and Recommendations

As discussed earlier, the study aimed to discover the pros and cons of the institutional monitoring and feedback system in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT) in an extraordinary time like the COVID-19 pandemic when the conventional classrooms were shifted completely to online platforms. After analyzing the survey data and focus group discussion, this research concluded that the system helped the EFL teachers cope with the transformation greatly. The result was that 73.3% of the EFL teachers agreed that the existing monitoring and feedback system supported them. They stated that without the system it would have been difficult for them to run online activities on such a great scale during pandemic. However, a few measures taken by the university could have been done differently. For example, instead of an economic reduction, demerit points should have been given to underperforming teachers, or instead of forming a generalized monitoring and feedback system, departmental monitoring and feedback system should have been established.

This study recommends that the training of the EFL teachers on technology-based monitoring and feedback systems for online EFL courses should be provided prior to implementation. EFL specific guidelines should be included in the system, and more academic freedom should be given to the teachers, rather than imposing restrictions on the way they teach, the way they communicate with students, and the way they maintain their working hours.

It also suggests that EFL teachers must be provided with updated hardware and software support from the institution along with training on monitoring and feedback tools. Future researchers can incorporate the impact of such a system on teachers' psychological wellbeing, which is missing in this study.

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Appendix 1

Teachers' Questionnaire

Dear Colleagues,

We hope you are doing great! As a part of our ongoing research on *Institutional Monitoring and Feedback in Developing and Delivering Online EFL Courses: A Case Study*, we need to do a survey. Please help us with your opinion on the following questions/statements. We assure you that your privacy will not be breached and the information/opinion you provide will be used only for research purpose.

- Shamsi Ara Huda & Ehatasham UI Hoque Eiten

Statements

1. Online EFL classes are similar to that of offline EFL classes in terms of teaching and learning outcomes.
 - i. Strongly Disagree
 - ii. Disagree
 - iii. Neutral
 - iv. Agree
 - v. Strongly Agree
2. The suddenness of paradigm shift from offline to online teaching has not spared enough time for the EFL teachers to be prepared.
 - i. Strongly Disagree
 - ii. Disagree
 - iii. Neutral
 - iv. Agree
 - v. Strongly Agree
3. Immediate intervention of my institute through monitoring and feedback has guided me at the different phases of my online EFL course conduction.
 - i. Strongly Disagree
 - ii. Disagree
 - iii. Neutral
 - iv. Agree
 - v. Strongly Agree
4. Monitoring objectives are similar for both online and offline EFL classes.
 - i. Strongly Disagree
 - ii. Disagree
 - iii. Neutral
 - iv. Agree
 - v. Strongly Agree
5. Monitoring online EFL classes is easier and more effective because of the direct involvement of technology and availability of data than that of conventional EFL classes.
 - i. Strongly Disagree
 - ii. Disagree
 - iii. Neutral
 - iv. Agree
 - v. Strongly Agree
6. Students' feedback is recorded in a more convenient way for online EFL classes.
 - i. Strongly Disagree
 - ii. Disagree
 - iii. Neutral
 - iv. Agree
 - v. Strongly Agree
7. Monitoring and feedback help improve teaching-learning in EFL classes.
 - i. Strongly Disagree
 - ii. Disagree
 - iii. Neutral
 - iv. Agree
 - v. Strongly Agree
8. Monitoring and feedback is necessary for ensuring quality of teaching in online EFL classes.
 - i. Strongly Disagree
 - ii. Disagree
 - iii. Neutral
 - iv. Agree
 - v. Strongly Agree
9. There is a need for reshaping the existing objectives and criteria of monitoring and feedback system of my institution.
 - i. Strongly Disagree
 - ii. Disagree
 - iii. Neutral
 - iv. Agree
 - v. Strongly Agree
10. Institutional monitoring and feedback systems sometimes undermine EFL teachers' freedom.
 - i. Strongly Disagree
 - ii. Disagree
 - iii. Neutral
 - iv. Agree
 - v. Strongly Agree
11. Students and teachers should be more involved with the institutional monitoring and feedback system in terms of fixing objectives and criteria.
 - i. Strongly Disagree
 - ii. Disagree
 - iii. Neutral
 - iv. Agree
 - v. Strongly Agree
12. The institution should provide the teachers and students with the monitoring and feedback rubrics prior to the beginning of each semester.
 - i. Strongly Disagree
 - ii. Disagree
 - iii. Neutral
 - iv. Agree
 - v. Strongly Agree
13. The institutional monitoring and feedback rubrics should be utilized in developing the quality of online EFL courses
 - i. Strongly Disagree
 - ii. Disagree
 - iii. Neutral
 - iv. Agree
 - v. Strongly Agree
14. If the monitoring and feedback rubrics of an institute are used to cut financial benefits of teachers and students in a pandemic situation, it will affect the sustainability of the institute.
 - i. Strongly Disagree
 - ii. Disagree
 - iii. Neutral
 - iv. Agree
 - v. Strongly Agree
15. By arranging a number of webinars, my institute has guided me to ensure the following teaching-learning pedagogies of my online EFL courses.
 - i. Strongly Disagree
 - ii. Disagree
 - iii. Neutral
 - iv. Agree
 - v. Strongly Agree

Appendix 2

Semi-structured Questions for Focus Group Discussion

1. How did you confirm active learning on an online platform? Please mention some of the ways.
2. How were you engaged with students of EFL courses?
3. Did you create any situation through which your students can apply their classroom learning into real life? How did you do that?
4. Can you connect any of your assigned work to your students, which is related to higher education innovation?
5. Did you discuss with your students about which feedback approach they are comfortable with?
6. Have you used any online tools for corrective feedback?
7. Did your institution help you in capacity building?
8. What do you think about the assessment rubric for teachers' evaluation?
9. How did you collect peer feedback?
10. Are you satisfied with the current monitoring and feedback system of your institution?