English Learning in Transition: Online Education During COVID-19 and Its Post-Pandemic Impact

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic brought about a profound shift in the educational landscape, particularly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) setting, as institutions rapidly transitioned from traditional classrooms to online learning environments. The development of the pandemic has induced several implications that necessitate an urgent evaluation of EFL learning strategies, technological adoption, and learner attitudes in the post-COVID era. The implicated impacts from the perspective of the Bangladeshi Tertiary EFL learners are explored in this study. Using a descriptive research design, this study collected quantitative data from a diverse group of 138 tertiary-level EFL students across 13 universities in Bangladesh. Participants were selected through convenience sampling and completed a validated and reliable 4-point Likert scale questionnaire. The data were analyzed using SPSS version 25.0, with a focus on key variables related to learning modalities, technological reliance, and EFL materials and curriculum. The findings reveal significant shifts in EFL learning dynamics, highlighting learners' positivity on blended learning models over traditional classroom settings. Students reported greater autonomy in learning, enhanced technological affiliation, and an increased reliance on digital resources and communication tools. The identified effects suggest a need for stakeholders—educators, curriculum designers, and policymakers—to consider these evolving preferences and competencies when designing future EFL programs.

INTRODUCTION

In response to the COVID crisis, all educational institutions in Bangladesh faced sudden institutional closures. This prompts private universities to swiftly shift to online classes with the approval of the University Grants Commission (UGC). This shift is categorized by Lockee (2021) as a forced migration, and Sands and Shushok (2020) considered such alternative and forced shift to online education as a reformation of priorities and expansion of possibilities that might impact the delivery of education. This transition led the learners to become accustomed to various genre of online learning approaches including synchronous and asynchronous, profoundly changing their strategies to learn the English language. Video communication tools like Zoom, Google Meet, Skype, and WhatsApp became crucial and preferred platforms for educational interaction during the pandemic (Saeed et al., 2021). These tools are likely to continue playing a significant role, potentially enriching the teacher-student dynamic and fostering an improved educational environment in the post-COVID world and this study examines how the shift to online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic affected EFL learners' motivation, strategies, and digital engagement in the post-COVID tertiary classroom in Bangladesh. Anoba and Cahapay (2020) identified blended learning as a promising direction for the post-COVID period as they found institutions heading towards the blended learning modality. Singh (2003) was overwhelmed with blended learning as he aptly stated that "Organizations must use a blend of learning approaches in their strategies to get the right content in the right format to the right people at the right time" (p. 52). Interestingly, Shifat et al. (2021) noted that while students were uncomfortable with fully online classes, they showed interest in blended models.

Since the surge in online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic (Ahmed et al., 2020), there has been a significant increase in learners' affiliation, adaptation, and adoption of digital learning projects, with the global e-learning market share projected to reach the US$1 trillion mark by 2027 (Singh, 2022). It was projected that 3 trillion minutes of video content would be streamed each month in 2022 (Cisco, 2021), which reflects the major changes in teaching and learning in the post-COVID class, especially in the EFL class, where video content motivates learners to learn the English language informally (Vanderplank, 2019). Now, learners are well aware of the necessity of using modern digital technologies to learn English which is an integral part of the innovative teaching-learning atmosphere (Islam & Bhuiyan, 2020). In this environment, learners will have abundant opportunities to enhance their knowledge through virtual meeting platforms and independent home studies (Chatziralli et al., 2021). Learners' such subtle changes complement constructivist learning proposed by Brooks and

Brooks (1999) and are expected to have a major impact on post-COVID EFL learning.

Interestingly, various contemporary studies have similar findings that disclose learners' interest in online content. The respondents from the survey developed by Chung et al. (2020) typically favored pre-recorded lectures that are being uploaded to YouTube, Google Classroom, or other cloud storage while learning online. Their study also recommended more training sessions for effective delivery of online content to alleviate learners' anxiety. Institutions need to take a further step to arrange such training, considering learners' needs to cope with post-COVID learning due to its effectiveness and ability to facilitate the comprehension and assimilation of concepts (Baig, 2011). Matra (2022) believed that online learning would prevail in the future. Baum (2020) exposed two opposing views on online learning. He identified one group already in the picture, willing to cope with it smoothly, even before the pandemic, while on the opposite side, the group consisting of policymakers is scrambling to adapt and adapt to unique challenges. However, the lack of anticipation from the policymakers in Bangladesh has made them uncertain about carrying online classes in the post-pandemic phase. The policymakers and the other stakeholders could barely get out of the shock created by COVID-19. Identifying the implications of online learning could help the stakeholders create more digital content and design the post-COVID EFL classes more effectively. This echoes the findings of Nneji et al. (2022), who observed detrimental effects on online teaching and learning, attributing these to a lack of adequate preparation for such an educational model within their study context.

Learners have been adapting the strategies and methodologies of learning English since COVID-19 confined them to their homes. Nneji et al. (2022) also identified significant implications in their study as they found a major impact on the learners' process of teaching and learning. Learners' affiliation with the digital lifestyle during the period reimagined the EFL context. Disruptive technologies, including virtualization and cloud computing, are emerging in this context. Lockee (2021) opined that "the flexibility and learning possibilities that have emerged from necessity are likely to shift the expectations of students and educators, diminishing further the line between classroom-based instruction and virtual learning" (p. 6). These findings are closely aligned with Markowska-Manista and Zakrzewska-Olędzka (2020), as they also found that the traditional daily routines, habits, and old tools from the pre-pandemic era were unworthy in the new context. Rather, learners' knowledge developed in the period provided them with new opportunities and choices to learn and engage in individualized learning. Popyk (2021) also argued that "children who acquired new skills and competencies at learning, communicating, managing social relations, and performing everyday practices during the shutdown gave a new meaning to their current educational practices and interpersonal skills'', (p. 540). These developments reflect learners' transitional period during the pandemic which will have a lasting impact in the

post-COVID era. Considering such findings, this study acknowledges the need for a proper plan to prepare for the post-pandemic English language learning environment. The implications of online learning, generated during COVID might change our pedagogical strategies towards learning English in the future days. Without proper measures, learning English in the post-pandemic days might face similar challenges raised during the early days of COVID-19. To take proper measures to avoid further challenges, this study set the following objectives

  i. The major aspects of English language learning that are going to be affected in the post-COVID setting due to the introduction of online learning during the COVID crisis.
  ii. The implications on those aspects in post-COVID English language learning.

The upsurge of online learning throughout the COVID crisis opened a new avenue in the EFL landscape. Online learning is not an invention of COVID but an initiator to disseminate the idea to the mass learners. The English language learners in Bangladesh were also familiarized with it only after the whole education in Bangladesh was highly affected by the crisis. Bangladesh was among those 14 countries where learners remained absent in their educational institutions for a whole year (March 2020 – February 2021) (COVID-19: Schools for More Than 168 million Children Globally Have Been Completely Closed for Almost a Full Year, Says UNICEF, 2021). However, the sudden shift to online education faced challenges including 'access to resources, equity, affordability, technological competence, pedagogy and materials, online assessment, and psychological well-being (Khan et al., 2020). These challenges were raised due to the unpreparedness of the whole education system compared to countries like the USA where standard online learning models were adopted along with contracts with Zoom and other online platforms in response to the impact of COVID-19 (Ndambakuwa & Brand, 2020). Researchers around the world believe that online learning is going to transform into blended or hybrid learning (Oginni et al., 2022) soon. This transition implies that the stakeholders need to deal with the newest form of learning in the post-COVID era. The implications of this study will help stakeholders design and plan post-COVID English Language Learning initiatives based on learners' perceptions.

This study identified the following research questions:
  1. Which of the aspects of English Language Learning will be affected in the post-COVID phase due to the inclusion of online learning during the pandemic?
  2. What are the implicated impacts of learning online in the post-COVID EFL class?

Theoretical Framework

      Shifat et al.'s (2021) study on Bangladeshi EFL learners implies the need to ensure an 'intelligent learning environment' with more effectiveness in the post-COVID world. Surely, the post-COVID EFL environment awaits with unique and anonymous challenges, including those raised during the pandemic. The introduction and familiarization of online learning not only opened a new avenue in EFL education but also created a significant impact on the post-COVID EFL space. Learners' attachment to digital online content is one of the key concerns in post-COVID English language learning. Due to numerous changes in the mentioned fields during the pandemic, it is imperative to observe the impact on the post-pandemic EFL curriculum as well. In addition, the impact can also be observed in self-regulatory strategies (Taghizadeh et al., 2024), motivation, self-efficacy, and self-regulated learning (Amoozegar et al., 2022), as well as the attitudes of learners. Learners' shifts in these identified areas set a new course in post-COVID learning which is more coherent to the nature of constructivist learning due to their development in the learning processes based on their adverse experiences gathered during COVID. Learning English during COVID-19 reflects the evolving and uncertain nature of knowledge, aligning closely with Brooks and Brooks's (1999) constructivist learning theory. According to Suhendi and Purwarno (2018), constructivism emphasizes authentic learning through context, process, social experience, and personal construction of knowledge—elements that directly resonate with learners' hands-on experiences during the pandemic.

      In contrast, alternative frameworks such as the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis, 1989) could be considered to explain learners' attitudes toward using digital tools. However, TAM primarily captures rational acceptance of technology and does not fully address the broader pedagogical and cognitive implications relevant to post-COVID learning. Similarly, Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, which highlights social interaction, cultural mediation, and learning from more knowledgeable others, is less applicable in this context. This study focuses on learners' individual reflections and internal adaptation to online learning environments in post-pandemic EFL education, rather than on socially scaffolded processes.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Attitudinal implications

      The shift from traditional physical classroom instruction to learn in online platforms represents a significant change for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners in Bangladesh. This change has necessitated ongoing evaluation and assessment by learners, teachers, policymakers, and researchers alike to understand its impacts fully. During and after the pandemic, learners showed mixed reactions to online learning modalities. While some admired the COVID

induced online learning (Sukman & Mhunkongdee, 2021) and preferred it over the traditional form due to its availability and flexibility (Ekici, 2021; Mohammadi et al., 2011), other studies reported a decline in enjoyment and satisfaction compared to traditional classroom settings (Erdel, 2022; Lee et al., 2021).

Significantly, Erdel (2022) observed only moderate satisfaction and slightly positive attitudes towards e-learning among learners. Similarly, Jalilinia (2021) and Mansour and Al-Sofi (2021) reported dissatisfaction among EFL learners due to several factors including inadequate interaction. Conversely, Mahyoob (2020) found that participants were generally opposed to continuing online education until a crisis like COVID-19 arose.

Despite these varied responses, it is evident that EFL educators are gradually adapting to the new normal, confronting the fact that online EFL learning is not a neoteric form exposed in the pandemic. It is also true that learners can't unlearn what they have learned, specifically in online English language learning. Tümen-Akyıldız et al. (2021) advocated for focusing on adapting to new conditions rather than merely comparing online to traditional learning methods. This shift in perspective has encouraged the exploration of blended learning approaches, which combine online and face-to-face interactions. Notably, Kazi-Tani and Kadaoui (2025) also believe that the pandemic COVID-19 reimagined the need for digital learning, which proves most effective when integrated into the framework of a structured blended learning. In addition, Basilaia and Kvavadze (2020) not only found online learning useful but also anticipated applying it even after the pandemic.

Institutions have increasingly adopted blended learning models, as evidenced by the works of Hughes (2020), Chung et al. (2020), and Anoba & Cahapay (2020). Dhawan (2020) highlighted the rising popularity of blended learning due to its potential for life-long learning beyond time and place. Furthermore, Shifat et al. (2021) documented positive learner attitudes toward blended learning environments, suggesting its potential to become a new norm in educational settings. Xu et al. (2020) also prophesized about the embracement of blended learning as a new norm by various institutions. This trend towards blended learning is expected to gain further traction in Bangladesh, potentially driving more focused research in this area in the post-COVID context (Shifat et al., 2021).

Motivational implications

Incorporating of educational technologies significantly propelled by globalization (Graddol, 1997), has long been influential but became particularly critical during the COVID-19 pandemic when the education system in Bangladesh transitioned to online modes. This period marked a revolutionary change in the use of information technologies in English Language Teaching (ELT), recognized for their ability to enhance access to learning resources, improve the quality of instruction, and reduce costs (Ahmed et al., 2020).

Educational technology, though not new to Bangladesh, gained unprecedented importance during the pandemic, transforming the motivational landscape for learners in the post-COVID phase. Rodríguez-Peñarroja and Haba-Osca (2024) highlighted the adverse effects of COVID-19 and observed increased motivation in the experimental group toward ICT (Information and communication technology)-mediated English learning. This is evident that technology facilitated a broader, more dynamic engagement with language learning during the pandemic, setting a foundation for continued innovation in the post-pandemic era.

The advancements in portable technology have further enabled learners to study English flexibly and outside traditional classroom settings, enhancing their motivation to become digital natives. Jiang (2020) highlighted that the learners are becoming active agents within the EFL online learning ecosystem, increasingly involving themselves with advanced digital learning applications and platforms. This long-standing connection between technological integration and English language learners' motivation promotes independent learning and improves interaction and communication (Rodríguez-Peñarroja & Haba-Osca, 2024).

Despite initial challenges, such as the rapid and somewhat hasty introduction of online learning structures which may have temporarily hampered learner motivation, the online learning facilities were widely promoted (Jiang, 2020), especially, during the pandemic. The expansion of online learning has the potential to significantly motivate learners, encouraging their participation in English language programs. The increased popularity of SPOCs (Small Private Online Courses) and MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) focused on English language learning (Jiang, 2020) verify such claims.

Implications of learning strategies

In Bangladesh, this transition was particularly challenging because neither students nor educators had prior experience with online learning before the onset of COVID-19 (Sajib, 2023). Globally, educators responded with innovative pedagogical strategies designed to mitigate the impact of these disruptions (Billah, 2020).

Partlow and Gibbs (2003) identified constructivist ideologies in online course structures, which offered learners choice and control over their expected learning. This theoretically enhances learning autonomy and engagement. However, such approaches contrast sharply with the learning culture in Bangladesh, where students are predominantly accustomed to learning in a traditional classroom setting only when the teachers are physically present. Though online synchronous classes provide a similar scope of learning English, they are fundamentally different in comparison to traditional classes. This discrepancy often resulted in learners remaining passive during online sessions (Shrestha et al., 2021).

Despite these challenges, the pandemic has arguably accelerated the adaptation of more personalized and student-centered learning strategies. As learners have sailed through the crisis, it is also needed to note that self-learning is one of the key factors to success in online environments (Li et al., 2025). Zhao and Watterston (2021) suggest that post-COVID learning will continue to evolve towards more personalized approaches, where pedagogies transform to support individual learning needs more effectively. In addition, Self-motivation and self-efficacy are also critical in this context. Almayez et al. (2025) identified a correlation between online learning, self-regulation, and improved proficiency among English language learners. Learners proficient in using computers and associated digital tools are likely to find greater opportunities in the evolving educational landscape.

Furthermore, the emphasis on self-directed or self-paced learning encourages interactions beyond the conventional classroom, offering flexibility and autonomy in learning processes (Benson, 2011; Holec, 1996; Chung et al., 2020). This shift implies key transitions in English education in the post-COVID phase, empowering learners to exploit the full spectrum of digital and blended learning environments.

Technological implications

Technology has consistently proven beneficial for language learners by offering increased freedom and encouragement (Ilter, 2009). Brown (2003) noted that the integration of the internet has enhanced the quality of language learning, a view supported by Krajka (2000), who detailed how online lessons significantly improve English writing skills in an interesting, attractive, and encouraging manner. Especially in the post-COVID period, when digital technologies have increasingly contributed to everyday life in Bangladesh (Sajib & Patwary, 2024).

In today's EFL classrooms, the choice of technology is not a notion of luxury anymore but rather a time-befitting demand to grab the attention of language learners. Ilter (2009) found that technology can be a solution to learners' motivational problems. Digital technology can enrich English language learning by creating more meaningful and impactful experiences for all learners if it is effectively integrated with pedagogical principles (Indriani et al., 2024). However, the transition to technology-enhanced learning during the pandemic presented new challenges. The abrupt shift to online platforms, while intended to boost motivation, often had the opposite effect due to inadequate training, insufficient devices, and difficulties in maintaining focus. The pandemic period was fraught with problems as learners had to navigate the threats of COVID-19 alongside adapting to new digital learning environments without alternative options. This led the digital technologies to play the decisive role in student education.

Despite these initial setbacks, the pandemic has ultimately established a more positive relationship between learners and technology, significantly

broadening the scope for online language skill development in the post-pandemic era. The internet has been instrumental in this transition, offering learners opportunities to engage with instructional videos, manage their learning pace, and interact with native speakers (Molchanova, 2014). Gao and Zhang (2020) highlighted response of one of the participants who could produce and utilize video content, which demonstrated the capabilities of online learning compared to traditional settings. Instructors have also adapted, with Abalkheel (2022) and Saeed et al. (2021) noting a positive shift towards the creation of diverse digital contents such as slide presentations, animations, and online documentaries.

The role of technology in creating diverse and engaging online EFL tasks has been branded by Ilter (2009) and is further reinforced by rapid advancements in ICT, which provide increased access to varied and authentic linguistic input, enable personalized and self-directed learning experiences, and help lower affective filters by cultivating interactive and low-anxiety environments (Andrew, 2025). The deepened engagement with digital technologies during the pandemic is expected to continue growing, transforming the use of educational technology. Mannong (2020) discussed the launch of various applications during the pandemic that has supported this transition. Social and communication platforms like WhatsApp with its versatile features including messaging, contacting, and sharing documents, pictures, videos, audio, and locations (Suryana et al., 2021) played a key role in maintaining the cohesion of online classes and bridging the gap between learners and teachers by facilitating interaction (Klein et al., 2018). These platforms facilitated not just interaction but also function as an LMS (Learning Management System) tool (Shrestha et al., 2021).

Implications on EFL material and curriculum

The early days of the pandemic revealed a significant challenge related to the lack of resources (Hazaea, et al., 2021; Tümen-Akyıldız et al., 2021) for EFL teachers and learners, highlighting an urgent need for more personalized and engaging content to maintain motivation and effectiveness in language learning. Lasekan et al. (2024) also believe in the crucial role of high-quality course content, as its effectiveness enhances learners' engagement. The contents become more vital in asynchronous classes where the material itself acts as the instructor. This underscores the importance of well-crafted content that is both useful and essential for acquiring the target language and aligning with learners' future success (Saba, 2012).

According to Sangsawang (2020), e-learning materials should be designed to promote analytical thinking, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. The effectiveness of online materials is evident, as Lalani and Li (2020) found that students can recall significantly more information from e-learning settings compared to traditional classrooms. Shifat et al. (2021) further noted students' positive attitudes towards the accessibility of online materials, emphasizing the

need for content designers to rethink and digitally transform educational content. Interestingly, both Fansury et al. (2020) and Tümen-Akyıldız et al. (2021) have identified the EFL arena as suitable for applying digital contents as learning resources. Pertiwi et al. (2022) noted the crucial role of design in online course content, urging teachers and content designers to exercise caution during the design process since learners interact primarily through screens. This focus on thoughtful design is essential to ensure effective learning and engagement in the digital EFL classroom.

The inevitable shift towards digitalization and digital transformations in the pandemic (Mishra, Gupta, & Shree, 2020) not only enhances the learning process but also encourages practice and development of language skills through interactive and engaging content. Moreover, the digital technologies introduced during the pandemic is expected to have a lasting impact on EFL curricula. Korkmaz and Toraman (2020) recommended teachers to integrate more effective lessons in the modified curriculum to support future instructors in an online learning setting. Jiang (2020) anticipated the need for online learning in the post-pandemic era for Chinese college students due to the change in college curriculum predicting new teaching models supported by the learning apps, induced by COVID. Similarly, Gyawali and Parajuli (2021) emphasized the need for technology-centered teaching and learning approaches and felt the need for a national education policy to support a new curriculum framework. This framework should align innovative curriculum, content, settings, and learning spaces with the social and psychological maturity of EFL learners (Gyawali & Parajuli, 2021). Additionally, efforts like those in most European countries to focus on digital skills and infrastructure in national recovery plans indicate a broader shift towards education digitalization (Zancajo et al., 2022).

Research gap

Learners' transition from on-campus to online platform during COVID crisis has been extensively studied, with researchers worldwide exploring its various dimensions and long-term effects on the post-COVID educational landscape. A considerable number of studies have explored various aspects of online learning both during and after the pandemic. For example, Khan et al. (2020) highlighted the perceptions of tertiary Bangladeshi learners and teachers regarding online pedagogy and assessment. Matra (2022) investigated the potential for sustainable online learning in post-COVID phase.

Further studies, such as those by Ogbuanya et al., (2021) studied the possibilities, challenges, and improvement strategies of blended learning in the post-COVID-19 context. Mayo (2020) outlined what the post-pandemic form of online learning and teaching in EFL classes might look like, suggesting frameworks for ongoing adaptation and development.

Despite these contributions, the unique effects of Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT) and pandemic-driven online learning on tertiary EFL learners remain underexplored. This study intends to fill that gap by focusing on learners' reflections on their experiences with online learning during the pandemic and identifying the implications for post-COVID EFL classes at the tertiary level. The insights gained from analyzing these reflections can be instrumental in shaping future educational practices.

This primary research not only contributes to our understanding of the changes brought by online learning but also serves as a critical resource for stakeholders in the educational sector, including teachers and administrative authorities. The findings will help in designing classes that better meet the needs of tertiary EFL learners, whose voices have been underrepresented in discussions about the post-pandemic educational setting. By focusing on the learner's perspective, this study provides valuable guidelines for adapting EFL education to suit better the evolving needs and circumstances brought about by the pandemic.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research design

The prime objective of this study is to explore the implicated impacts of during-COVID online EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learning in the post-COVID epoch. The shifting from traditional classes to ERT and then to online learning had a robust impact on the EFL setting, especially on the learners who had to face enormous challenges (Farrah & Al-Bakry, 2020; Khan et al., 2020) in the early days of COVID-19. This led the study to examine learners' perspectives through a quantitative research design around the futuristic impacts on the 5 significant aspects of EFL learning, including learners' attitudes, motivation, learning strategies, affiliation with technology, and interaction with the digital learning materials and curriculum. More specifically, a descriptive quantitative research module was employed to establish the methodological design for exploring the outcomes of COVID-19-Induced online learning in the EFL context. Watt (2015) suggested descriptive research designs due to their alignment with cause-and-effect studies in EFL setting. This study aims to explore the post-COVID EFL context from the learners' perspective to identify the impact of online learning. Descriptive quantitative research design helped the study to identify the significant effects (McDonough & McDonough, 2014) of online learning explicitly in the post-pandemic context.

Sample

Considering the objective of this research, the EFL students who have at least some experiences in online learning during COVID were recognized as the research participants for this study. This led the research to introduce non-

probability sampling aligning the objective of the research (Becker et al., 2012). Students from various private universities were selected through convenience sampling, as the researcher had access to the participants and they were available and willing to participate (Creswell, 2012). A total of 138 students participated in this study, and the sample size was deemed sufficiently large due to access, funding, cost, and time constraints (Creswell, 2012). The participants responded in this study represented 9 different departments from 13 private Universities in Bangladesh. It was ensured that the participants had attended at least one four-month semester of online EFL lessons during and post-COVID-19.

Instrument

A closed-ended questionnaire was designed for the EFL students who were the sole participants in this study. Students 'demographic data were recorded in the first section, whereas the second section recorded questionnaires which were grounded in the literature review while considering the purposes of the instrument (Gibson and Brown, 2009). The set consisted of 10 questions to identify the implications of online learning from the participants. The questionnaire was self-administered. In the construct validity analysis, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy was calculated to assess the appropriateness of the factor analysis for our data set. The KMO statistic was found to be 0.783, which indicates a good level (between 0.7 and 0.8) of sampling adequacy (Field, 2009). A 4-point Likert scale (1= Strongly agree, 2= Agree, 3= Disagree, 4= Strongly disagree) was introduced to make the respondents determine a certain point to maximize concrete responses (Croasmun & Ostrom, 2011). It is also needed to mention that the participants were briefed about their ethical rights before recording their responses. Data were collected after their verbal/written consent to participate in the study.

Data collection

The long-distance survey method was applied to gather data to cover a larger area within a limited time, effort, and expense (Schilling, 2013). Primarily, a Google Form was created to depict the questionnaire and then distributed to the participants through social media networks. At the same time, a questionnaire was also provided in paper form to the rest of the participants to speed up the data collection procedures. Before the complete disbursement of the questionnaire, the internal reliability of the questionnaire was measured through Cronbach's Alpha which was 0.89 after 20 data. Since the value is higher than 0.70 (<0.89), it means that the instrument has internal consistency (Cortina, 1993).

Data Analysis

Descriptive data analysis was introduced to analyze the quantitative data through SPSS version 25. The electronic survey part automatically stored the responses of the participants in a Google spreadsheet, which was later transferred

to SPSS along with the rest of the data, which were collected through physical survey forms. Participants' demographic status was analyzed through frequency, percentage, valid percentage, and cumulative percentage. The implications referred to by the students were depicted and analyzed through mean, mode, standard deviation, and percentile categories to describe them. To clarify and represent concrete information, 'strongly agree' and 'agree' responses have been categorized under the 'agree' category, and so have the 'disagree' and the 'strongly disagree' under the 'disagree' category.

FINDINGS

The demographic information presented in Table 1 indicates that the total number of participants (138) represents 9 different departments from 13 private universities in Bangladesh. Out of 138 participants, 73 (52.9%) were female and 65 (47.1%) were male. Both undergraduate and postgraduate students voluntarily participated, with 47.1% from the undergraduate level and 52.9% from the postgraduate level. No missing data was recorded in this study.

In response to Research Question 1, this study identifies that online learning, initiated during the COVID-19 crisis, will have an impact on various aspects, including the attitude and motivation of learners, learning strategies, learners' affiliation with technology, and digital learning materials & curriculum (Table 4). Those aspects are interconnected in various sub-aspects that impact the post-COVID EFL landscape (Figure 1). The individual mean score (<2) confirms that the COVID-shaped online learning will have an impact on the following aspects in post-COVID EFL learning settings. However, the responses imply that due to the shift to online learning during COVID-19, English language learners' technological affiliation will be greatly affected in the post-COVID setting (Mean scores 1.67 & 1.61). Learners' motivation will be affected after that as learners will be more focused on digital efficacy and learning through the internet (Mean scores 1.82 & 1.83) followed by EFL material and curriculum (Mean scores 1.86 & 1.91). Learners' attitude reflects that the mode of teaching will be affected (Mean scores 1.86 & 1.93) more than their strategy (Mean scores 1.96 & 1.86) to learn in the post-COVID phase.

Table 1

*The Aspects Which Will be Affected due to COVID-formed Online Learning*

Factors	Aspect	Mode	Std. Dev.	SA	A	D	SD
					Percentage (%)		
1. COVID-time online learning experiences will create more opportunities to learn the English Language online in the post-COVID phase.	Attitude	2	0.664	27.5	60.9	9.4	2.2
2. Blended/ hybrid EFL learning will be more popular than 100% online classes or traditional face-to-face classes in the coming future.	Attitude	2	0.731	28.3	52.9	16.7	2.2
3. Learners will be more motivated to learn operating digital ed-tools to cope with the post-COVID EFL classes.	Motivation	2	0.664	31.9	55.1	12.3	0.7
4. EFL Learners will be more inclined to the Internet for English learning programs in the post-COVID era. (e.g., MOOCs)	Motivation	2	0.507	22.5	71.7	5.8	-
5. English language learners will try to learn more by themselves in the post-COVID class.	Learning strategies	2	0.724	26.1	54.3	17.4	2.2
6. Online learning digital tools will provide freedom of learning and encouragement for the learners in the post-COVID phase.	Learning strategies	2	0.700	31.9	51.4	15.9	0.7

#	Item	Construct			SA	A	D	SD
7.	Learners will use more technological support to adopt online learning systems in the post-COVID phase.	Technological affiliation	2	0.571	38.4	56.5	5.1	-
8.	Learners will have more affiliation with digital learning and communication tools in the post-COVID phase. (e.g., WhatsApp, Messenger, YouTube, ZOOM, Google Meet, etc.)	Technological affiliation	2	0.609	44.2	52.2	2.2	1.4
9.	EFL learners will have more interaction with digital content in the post-pandemic classes.	EFL Material & curriculum	2	0.642	26.8	61.6	10.1	1.4
10.	A modified curriculum might be adopted in the post-COVID EFL learning context recognizing the changes initiated by the online learning programs and traditions.	EFL Material & curriculum	2	0.615	23.2	63.8	12.3	0.7

Note. SA = Strongly Agree, *A*= Agree, *D*= Disagree, *SD* = Strongly Disagree.

Figure 1

Interconnected Aspects and Sub-aspects of Online Learning on the Post-COVID EFL landscape
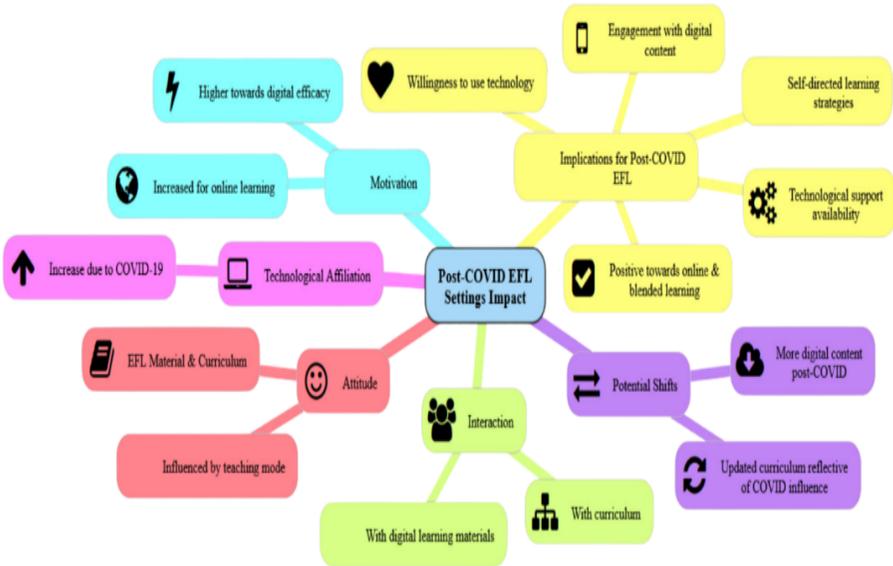
Note: The image portrays the interconnected aspects and sub-aspects while learning online in the post-COVID EFL landscape (Designed through www.map-this.com)

Research question 2 seeks the implications of the post-COVID EFL setting. Table 4 depicts learners' responses in percentage frequency from 'strongly agree' (SA) to 'strongly disagree' (SD), along with the Mean score (M) and standard deviation. deviation.

Implications of online learning in the post-COVID epoch

The first prompt (Std. Dev. 0.664) records over 80% agreed response which implies that learners are positive towards online learning for developing their language skills in the coming days. At the same time, 81.2% of learners believe that blended or hybrid learning will be more popular (Std. Dev. 0.731) than complete online or physical EFL classes.

Prompts 3 and 4 imply that learners will be more motivated towards digital efficacy in order to operate ed-tools (Std. Dev. 0.664) and towards online courses (Std. Dev. 0.507) for learning English in the post-COVID phase. 87% and 94.2% of learners respectively agreed with the mentioned prompts.

In comparison to the other prompts, it is found that fewer Bangladeshi tertiary level EFL learners (80.4%) believe in self-directed learning (Std. Dev. 0.724) and only

83.3% agreed about learning freedom through digital tools (Std. Dev. 0.700) in the post-COVID phase. Still, it implies that most learners will try to learn English through their own investment.

Learners' highest positive response carried in the prompt referring to their digital affiliation. Almost 95% of learners agreed to take the support of technology to adopt an online learning management system (Std. Dev. 0.571). In addition, based on the agreement of 96.4% of respondents, it can be implied that students will use communication tools (Std. Dev. 0.609) like WhatsApp, Messenger, YouTube, ZOOM, Google Meet, etc. in the post-COVID phase.

At the very end learners' responses were recorded based on their interaction with digital content. A total of 88.4% of responses were stored under the 'strongly agree' and 'agree' category which implies that learners will have more digital content (Std. Dev. 0.642) in the post-COVID EFL classes. At the same time, 87% positive responses from the participants imply that the curriculum will be updated (Std. Dev. 0.615) in the post-COVID period, acknowledging the change initiated by COVID-period online learning.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Pedagogical Implications

The findings contribute to the pedagogy in the post-COVID EFL settings. Based on the findings, this study identified the implicated impacts on learners' technological affiliation followed by their motivation to learn through technology, their dependency on digital contents and supported curriculum, their attitudes towards the mode of learning, and their strategies to learn in the post-COVID phase. This study identified learners' positive perceptions towards online learning which implies that blended or hybrid learning will be more popular than 100% online or face-to-face EFL classes in the post-COVID epoch. Ray (2020) also considered online learning in the form of blended learning as a future global form of learning. In addition, the findings of Anoba and Cahapay (2020) had a similar revelation towards blended learning as "a positive direction in education in the post-COVID-19 period" (p. 310). Mojumder et al. (2025) also identified the authenticity of adopting a hybrid mode of learning in tertiary institutions, considering the socioeconomic and sociocultural context of Bangladesh. Due to COVID-19, EFL learners have become aware of the benefits and effectiveness of online learning, which suggests their continued engagement with it in the post-COVID period. This study aligns with the findings of Mohamed et al. (2023), who also found online learning to be effective for EFL students after COVID-19. This study also suggests that in the post-COVID phase, learners will be self-motivated and enjoy greater freedom in digital learning, allowing them to learn English independently. Billah (2020) reported similar findings, with respondents predicting a rise in online programs and degrees as a preferred approach for

learning English in the future. This study found that learners are interested in digital tools and internet-based learning. Similarly, the students in the study conducted by Alhaider (2023) also favored the implementation of e-learning in language classes, as they considered it beneficial for developing listening, speaking, writing, and reading skills. However, on the contrary, Jerotijević-Tišma and Radosavljević-Krsmanović (2024) found that their students were more motivated toward face-to-face classes during the post-COVID era, citing doubts about the effectiveness of online learning. In the Indonesian context, Norhasanah's (2021) study revealed that most participants favored face-to-face classes, emphasizing the importance of interaction and their previous experience of learning. Almahasees et al.'s (2021) study also found that both students and teachers preferred face-to-face classes over online learning, citing limited interaction and motivation, technical and internet challenges, and concerns about data privacy and security.

Technological Implications

However, the most interesting finding of this study is the learners' affiliation with digital technology. The finding implies that learners will have more interaction with digital technologies to learn and communicate online in the post-COVID period. The finding is aligned with the finding portrayed by the study developed by Korkmaz and Toraman (2020) where they listed enhanced information technology along with strong internet connectivity for smoother learning in the post-COVID phase. Gyawali and Parajuli (2021) also identified the role of digital tools and online communication as post-pandemic instructional activities. On the contrary, the students in Jerotijević-Tišma and Radosavljević-Krsmanović's (2024) study blamed the pandemic for making online learning tiresome.

Attitudinal and Motivational Implications

Online learning, initiated during the COVID-19 crisis in Bangladesh, was a novel and unknown phenomenon for most tertiary learners in Bangladesh. Most of the respondents in Sajib's (2023) study identified the lack of learners' autonomy as a challenge in online classes during COVID-formed online learning. However, a significant portion of the learners have overcome the challenge due to their affiliation with online learning during the pandemic which changed learners' attitude towards online learning as this study identifies the rise of self-directed learning as one of the key implications of post-COVID EFL learning. Zhao and Watterston (2021) also exposed their concern about student autonomy and transformation in pedagogy in the post-COVID setting. The students in the study conducted by Ariawan et al. (2024) not only responded positively to learner autonomy but also claimed to have gained autonomy through the optimal use of internet resources while learning English. Jerotijević-Tišma and Radosavljević-

Krsmanović (2024) found their students to be positive, with most of them claiming to favor online learning due to its scope for self-paced learning.

Curriculum Implications

This study also implies that post-COVID learners will have further dependency on digital content in their EFL classes and the curriculum will be further updated to align the changes initiated by COVID-time online learning. Peimani and Kamalipour (2021) reported similar findings, as they calculated the surge in innovative resource design and restructuring of the curriculum in the post-COVID era. This study revealed that EFL learners will have more interaction with digital content in the post-pandemic setting. Alhaider (2023) also identified that learners' dependency would shift away from teachers, as they had the opportunity to revisit classes in an online learning setup. In a different note, Li et al. (2025) found online content challenging to engage while learning independently. This study also identified the need for an updated curriculum to align with the needs of online learning in the post-COVID setting, which is consistent with the study conducted by Molefe et al. (2024), who recommended restructuring the curriculum of higher education institutions to incorporate online learning and teaching. Galustyan et al. (2023) also suggested that higher education curricula should be redesigned to diversify teaching approaches and enhance student engagement and interaction.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The unidentified challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic redefined our strategies for EFL education. A handful of studies have focused on the nature and patterns of online EFL learning, while others have exposed the challenges and limitations, with the primary objective of making the learning environment more comfortable for learners. The post-COVID phase has a lot to take from the COVID period in terms of class delivery, application of digital tools, learning and teaching management, digital content, supported curriculum, etc. This study recommends that the stakeholders take proper action to address these aspects to bring necessary changes to benefit from virtual learning. The rise of online EFL classes during the pandemic suggests the integration of online classes into blended or hybrid learning models. Mayo (2020) considered the present situation exciting due to the experience of online courses during COVID-19 which will be helpful for us to take the best of online classes and traditional classes in order to create a blended classroom. Learners' increased affiliation with online learning might redesign several aspects, including digital efficacy, sustainable teaching, and learning methodology, along with supported digital contents and curriculum, which might play a major role. The flexibility of online learning will motivate the stakeholders to incorporate asynchronous content as learners can learn at their convenience

(Mayo, 2020). The implications suggested by this study will not only recommend that teachers redesign the learning and teaching material to synchronize learners' motivation and attitude, but also attract the university administrations to transform English language learning digitally by equipping necessary technology and arranging proper training to adapt to post-COVID learning. Korkmaz and Toraman (2020) also recommended cautious plans with a sustainable standpoint from the stakeholders considering the educational needs of the learners. The way emergency online learning has evolved and showcased its necessity during the pandemic, it would be unwise to overlook its capacity and possibility in the coming future. Lockee (2021) believed that new audiences for online learning will emerge due to the learning possibilities and flexibility offered by online education. She adds that the boundary line between classroom learning and online learning will be diminished as both the students and educators raise their expectations in the post-COVID period.

LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

The perspective of the EFL learners were considered to identify the implications of online learning induced during COVID. The teachers and service providers in the disguise of administrative authorities were not considered for this study to record their responses. Jiang (2020) mentioned that how the role of teachers and service providers in post-pandemic EFL learning will become valuable to satisfy the needs of post-COVID EFL learning. In addition, more participants from not only other private universities but also public universities would enrich the implications of COVID-formed online learning for the post-COVID epoch. In addition, statistical calculation was not introduced while selecting the sample size. Besides, online learning and teaching pedagogy in various universities were not similar in terms of technique, methodology and technology which were considered by this study. The use of convenience sampling is another limitation of this study, as it reduces its capacity for generalizability and diversity of perspectives. This study also limits its scope by introducing a closed-ended survey questionnaire, which limits its scope to gather the implications of online learning in limited settings. This study aimed to examine the impact of online learning in the post-COVID era, with a specific focus on the online learning model introduced during the pandemic. The implications realized by this study were based on the perspective of the students which opens the avenue to design further research involving the other stakeholders, e.g.; teachers, policymakers, service providers, etc. Future studies can also explore the implications of online learning on other aspects by designing open-ended questionnaires for all stakeholders connected to EFL learning.

CONCLUSION

The COVID-19 significantly raised its impact on the tertiary-level education sector globally, particularly within the context of EFL classes in Bangladesh. The sudden shift to online learning has forced learners to adapt to new forms of communication and develop self-directed learning, computer and internet efficacy, and motivation for learning. Adhering to the constructivist framework (Brooks & Brooks, 1999), this study tried to evaluate learners' capacity to generate, demonstrate, and exhibit those aspects in the post-COVID EFL class based on their online learning during the COVID crisis.

Learners have shown a positive attitude towards blended learning which is an emerging and promising mode of learning for the post-COVID period and this shift necessitates deliberate attention from all educational stakeholders to optimize course structures, enhance instructor feedback mechanisms, and foster effective student interactions and learning styles. The findings of this study highlight the need to adapt educational practices to address learners' needs better and equip them for future challenges. Due to the global importance of English, it plays a significant role in the daily life of the Bangladeshi people (Sajib et al., 2020), and their attitude toward learning the English language is strong. This prompted the study to urgently identify the implications of online learning in post-COVID EFL classrooms in Bangladesh, aiming to better prepare learners, teachers, and policymakers for more effective and updated learning experiences. Jiang et al. (2022) highlighted implications for education policymakers, suggesting a shift toward incorporating virtual platforms into the learning process. It is essential to address the concerns of learners' readiness to ensure effective online learning in the post-COVID EFL classes. The education sector needs to keep evolving to accommodate new learning approaches, addressing the changing needs of learners and equipping them for future challenges. The professor at the University of Jordan, named Dr. Amjad, used 'Lark', an online communication tool, to show his affiliation and trust in online learning. He revealed his belief in the coexistence of online and offline learning and expressed a desire to continue using Lark even after the pandemic (Lalani and Li, 2020).

The implications also suggest that post-COVID learning requires more support from all stakeholders, including policymakers and the government. Mishra et al., (2020) urged the government to extend support for ensuring online communicative tools, quality digital knowledge, and technology-affiliated learning to make education uninterrupted for the students even in a pandemic like COVID-19. In conclusion, while this study sheds light on the immediate implications of pandemic-induced online learning, it also sets the stage for a broader, more inclusive examination of how such crises can catalyze enduring educational innovations.

Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest associated with the publication of this manuscript.

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